# VIETNAM Courier

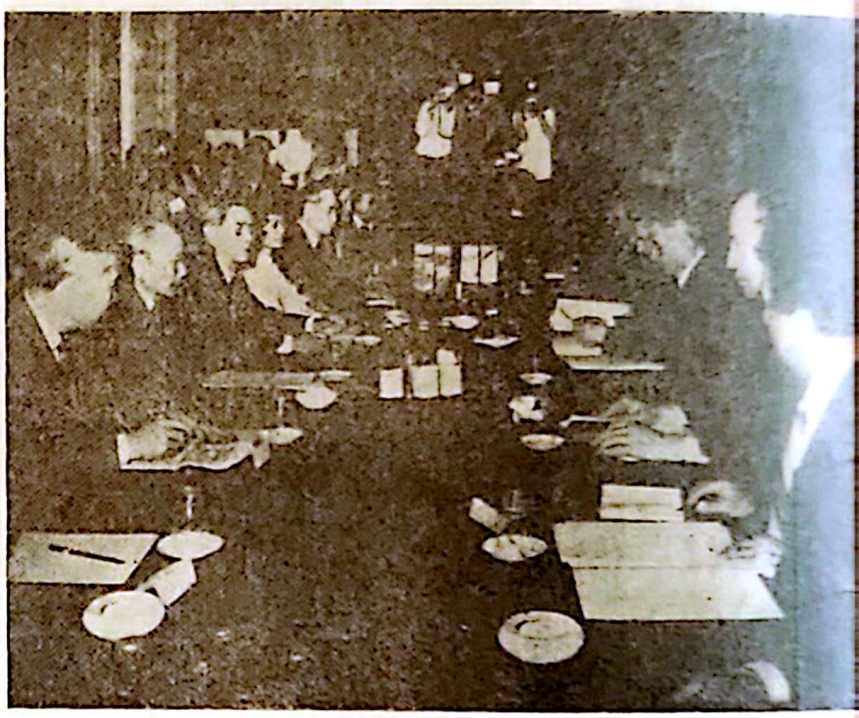
A MONTHLY REVIEW PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND RUSSIAN ★ 7/88

- CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh: Renewal for Progress
- Some Problems in Agricultural Production at Present
- The Population Explosion Remains a Major Concern
- An Interview with Writer Le Luu

# OUR GUESTS

*CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh (left) welcoming Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and his wife on an official visit to Vietnam, in Ho Chi Minh City (16 April).*

Photo : VAN KHANH



*General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh (right) receiving Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party and President of the Socialist Republic of Rumania in Hanoi (17 April).*

*Comrade Nguyen Van Linh holding talks with Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu and Comrade Elena Ceausescu.*

*General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh (right) receiving Comrade G.P. Razumovski, alternate member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.*

Photos : KIM HUNG

## A JOINT VENTURE: THE VIKARENT TRANSPORT ENTERPRISE

On 18 April, 1988, in Vung Tau, South Vietnam, a transport enterprise of a particular kind, named VIKARENT, was set up. It is the first joint venture between a Vietnamese and a foreign company under the terms of Vietnam's recently-promulgated *Law on Foreign Investment in Vietnam* (see full text of the law in *Vietnam Courier* No. 3.— 1988). The Director of the HOCHIMEX company in Hong Kong is its Director, and Mr. Phan Van Phuong, acting Director of the Tourist Transport Company (Vung Tau — Con Dao Tourism Company), is Deputy-Director.

The initial investment is 3 million dollars with HOCHIMEX putting in 1.5 million, including 120 cars and trucks, a car-repair shop, and supplies of spare parts.

VIKARENT will take both Vietnamese and foreign tourists on sightseeing tours throughout the country.

This year, the Vung Tau — Con Dao Tourism Company will sign contracts with two other Hong Kong companies for bringing 5,000 tourists into the country.

HONG SON

## An Exhibition of Traditional Art

Traditional art of which many specimens can still be seen has grown, however, more and more alien to modern society owing to deterioration and inadequate interpretation of old spiritual values. This exhibition, organized by the College of Fine Arts in April 1988, comprises 120 reproductions (photos, rubbings, drawings, architectural sketches) drawn from the personal collection of lecturer Phan Cam Thuong (born 1957). It seeks to present specimens of traditional art with the help of modern methods of artistic research. The exhibits include ancient wood carvings : those found at Thai Lac pagoda (done in the 13th-14th centuries) depicting fairies playing music and offering flowers and incense — a mixture of Cham-Dai Viet motifs; rubbings of ornamental designs; stone statues of Ngoc Kham pagoda (15th century); decorations on stone stelae and wooden altars of But Thap pagoda (1647). They testify to a harmonious evolution of Vietnamese ornamental art.

Specimens of Buddhist graphic arts comprise 18 reproductions of drawings found at But Thap and Thai Lac pagodas and done in the 18th-19th centuries—particularly seven reproductions of Luc Thu and Hai Hoi drawings used in funeral rites and restored in 1927. They underline the part played by Buddhist graphic arts in religious life and point to their relationship with Dong Ho and Hang Trong folk-woodcuts. The image of the Vietnamese in ancient times is conveyed by reproductions of portraits of feudal noblemen who sponsored the building of these pagodas in the 18th-19th centuries and the features observed on statues of Bodhisattvas. Statues of Buddha found in Vietnam are compared with reproductions of ancient Asian sculptures, which come from two sources : India-Khmer and China-Japan-Vietnam.

*Statue of the Bodhisattva Van Thu, 19th century (Kien So pagoda — Ha Bac province).*

Photo : DUONG MANH TRI

Also on display are rubbings of bas-reliefs found in village communal houses built in the 17th century. Reproductions of Cham towers of various types (My Son, Po Nagar, Poklan Giarai, Doi Tower) figure side by side with those of the Dong Duong and Hoa Lai architectural complexes which are brilliant artistic achievements of the Cham people in the 7th-14th centuries. Not merely an exhibition of reproductions, this exposition points to a new trend of research into artistic form and language. According to its organizer it bids fair to shed light on many still obscure points. Art should be interpreted from many angles. While carefully preserving our traditional arts we must interpret them using modern methods.

DO TRUNG LAI

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*Front cover :* The final round of the National Wrestling Championships held in Ha Bac province.

Photo : PHAN SANG


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# CAN CARDIO – VASCULAR DISORDERS BE SUCCESSFULLY TREATED WITH TRADITIONAL HERBAL MEDICINES ?

In his youth, economic engineer Hoang Van Hung often helped his physician grandfather in his practice of traditional medicine. Later, in his spare time he studied medicinal plants in earnest and treated relatives and friends for current ailments. But it was not until he managed to cure his elder sister of paraplegia that he decided to become a physician.

He spent three years travelling in many parts of the country looking for medicinal plants and proven family recipes. He also searched for pharmaceutical materials with specific therapeutic properties. He tested the new drugs he prepared on himself and perfected the traditional recipes he collected.

Among his patients, many had been unsuccessfully treated with modern drugs or by traditional acupuncture. One case in point is Mrs Nguyen Thi Van, 62, from Ho Chi Minh City who was affected with arterial hypotension which degenerated into a condition in which the difference between systolic and diastolic pressure was sharply reduced. She was treated in several hospitals at home and abroad (The Soviet Union, France) without avail. After only 30 days of treatment, Hoang Van Hung managed to improve her condition visibly. Now, two years after, her health has remained reasonably good.

One of the reasons why Hoang Van Hung has concentrated on trying to treat cardio-vascular disorders with local herbal medicines is because they constitute one of the three main fields of world medicine at present. Said he, "The country badly needs family doctors at a time when the Party and the State advocate universal public health services."

Before and after treatment, his patients undergo check-ups with electro-cardiograms at some hospital. Since he began in earnest to treat cardio-vascular disorders in 1983, he has successfully dealt with all cases of arterial hypotension. In many cases of severe arterial hypertension with threatened infarct, he has managed to make emergency care unnecessary.


*(Continued on page 6)*



PANORAMA ● PANORAMA

# A FAMILY OF ARTISTES

It is not without reason that art lovers in Hanoi speak with especial affection of Tran Tien and Le Mai and their daughters.

The couple live in Phan Dinh Phung street, a large avenue lined with tall shade trees. In their home artistes and theatre-fans often meet for friendly talks and lively discussions on the drama, the ballet and the cinema.

Le Mai is a stage artiste of 30 years standing and has played with great success a wide variety of parts, particularly the roles of the mothers in "Karl Marx's Family", "The Portrait", "The Guerillas". She has been equally successful when playing the parts of younger characters, e.g. the young women in "The Orange Garden" and the film "The Child of the Neighbour".

What has been particularly noted in this artiste is her passion for the parts she played. That is why the characters she acted never failed to leave a deep impression on the minds of the spectators.

Raising three daughters is no small burden but she has not let it stand in the way of her artistic career.

At 50, she still regularly attends most meetings of the "Club of Stage Artistes". Her most recent success is the part she played in "The House in Paradise", a Czechoslovak play.

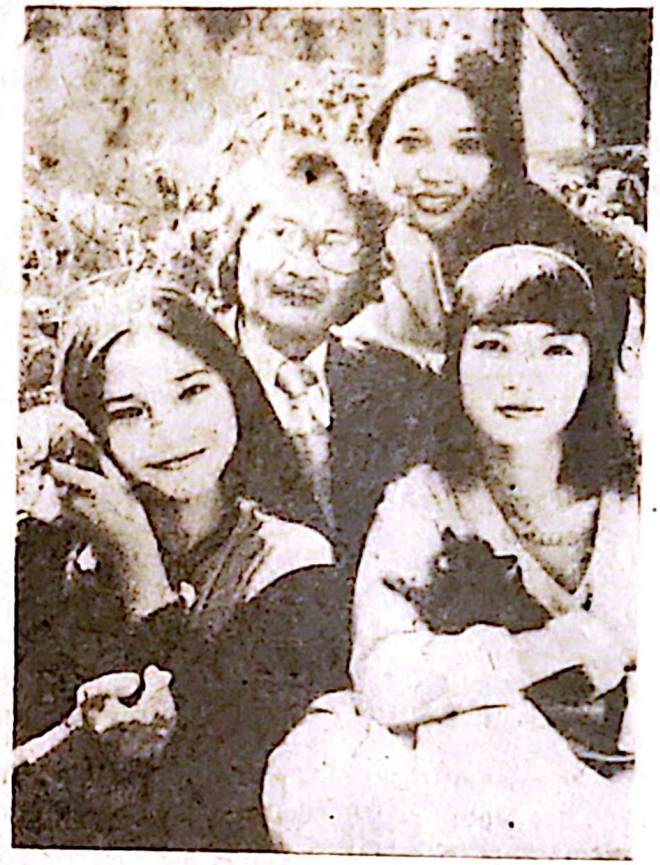
Her husband, Tran Tien, is a well-known actor in both the theatre and the cinema. He is specially gifted for acting numerous roles: that of an advisor in matters of love in the film "Selection of a Son-in Law", Mr Cay in "The 89th Minute". But he has also been highly praised for his acting the part of the 15th-century national hero Nguyen Trai in the play "Nguyen Trai in Dong Quan" and that of the plain-spoken neighbour in "The Rude Father".

Their three daughters have earned good reputations for themselves in the performing arts.

Le Van, the eldest, is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who has just turned 30. She graduated from the National Ballet School in 1978. She excels in both traditional and modern dances, and has been especially successful in the ballets Spartacus and Gisèle.

She is also a distinguished actress, who gets along well with her directors whose artistic designs she deeply understands. At the 1985 Film Festival she won the "best actress" prize for her acting in the film "When Does the 10th Lunar Month Come?" directed by Dang Nhat Minh, which won the first prize at the Fifth National Film Festival and a special prize at the Honolulu International Film Festival.

Her younger sister, Le Khanh has matured on the stage. She has won the hearts of the spectators by playing Juliet in Shakespeare's famous play; Erika in "The House in Paradise" and other roles in the repertoire of the Youth Drama Company.



*Stage artiste Tran Tien with his daughters. From left to right: Le Vi, Le Van and Le Khanh.*

Photo: MAI NAM

She is now making her first steps in the cinema by acting in a film being shot in the northern highlands.

The youngest girl in the family is Le Vi. When in her second year at the National Ballet School, her record was far from satisfactory. But she refused to take the advice of her parents and shift to another career. Working with determination and firm belief in her ultimate success, she eventually won the highest marks at graduation. Now 21, she is a promising young dancer of the Central Song, Dance and Music Theatre.

All three girls owe their successes to no influential backing. Their achievements have been the results of their talents and persevering efforts.

NGOC THU

# NGUYEN VAN LINH'S BOOK: «RENEWAL FOR PROGRESS»

The Sixth National Congress of the CPV, held in December 1986, is regarded as the Congress of Renewal. Since then the Party Central Committee has held four plenary sessions at which programmes of action based on the historic resolutions of the Congress were mapped out. The Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee have worked hard to solve a number of major problems.

At all conferences of the Party leadership and many meetings at various levels, Comrade Nguyen Van Linh has made important speeches. These speeches, together with a number of articles he has written since the Sixth Congress, have been gathered into "Renewal for Progress", recently published in Hanoi by the *Su That* Publishing House. This book not only elucidates the Sixth Congress's viewpoint on renewal but also sheds light on many practical problems, and gives concrete form to a series of policies put forward by the Congress.

Analysing the development of the socialist revolution in Vietnam since 1975 the General Secretary points out that renewal is prompted not by personal wishes, but by the objective requirements of the revolution.

He writes: "More than ever, the revolution in our country urgently calls for a profound and all-embracing renewal of the way we think and work in all fields. The Sixth Congress marked a major turning-point on the road to renewal". He stresses: "This is a characteristic of the revolution, especially the socialist revolution, tha nature of Marxism-Leninism and the inevitable trend of our time, which are also contained in the great thoughts expressed at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Party of the great Lenin".

On the content of renewal the book emphasizes: "Renewal is all-embracing. This is because the errors we have committed in our line and major policies, in both our strategic guidance and practical organization, stem from an erroneous and immature perception of socialism, from voluntarism and complacency, and from a simplistic way of thinking and acting. All this has led to serious stagnation in all fields of life — political, economic, cultural and social. Since the renewal in our thinking is a precondition for renewal in pratice, it should be comprehensive. We must have a correct conception of socialism and grasp its laws as well as the meaning of its concrete manifestations. We must work out the way we are to follow, the methods we are to adopt, and the rate at which we are to progress, in conformity with the specific conditions in our country which is advancing to socialism from small-scale production, bypassing the stage of capitalist development".

However, to carry out all-round renewal doesn't mean to adopt a nihilistic attitude. One must strictly abide by the laws of dialectics, rely on the past achievements of our Party in the revolution, uphold its views on the two strategic tasks, on proletarian dictatorship, on the right to collective mastery of the working people, on the three revolutions, and on the system in which the Party is the leader, the Government the manager, and the people, the master.

"Only by reaffirming what is correct and continuing to uphold it, can we bring about renewal. Otherwise, we would cause ideological chaos." Linking renewal to the general line of the socialist revolution General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh points out: "To fulfil these tasks and achieve these objectives, the Congress has stressed that the most important thing is to renovate our economic and social policies in order to bring into full play the working people's role as collective master and mobilize the masses in simultaneously carrying out the

three revolutions: the revolution in production relations, the scientific and technological revolution and the cultural and ideological revolution."

Comrade Nguyen Van Linh has repeatedly stressed the importance of theoretical work. He writes: "In the renewal of thinking the fundamental point is to renew theoretical thinking". Many of our serious mistakes have been due to our lagging behind in theoretical work. It is also because our theoretical work is little developed that we still differ among ourselves on a series of important issues of the socialist revolution. Therefore, "theoretical discovery should be the premise and basis for practical renewal".

Our Party is trying to work out specific guidelines and measures for renewal in each field, first and foremost, the economic field. On the Party's new economic policy in particular, Comrade Nguyen Van Linh expresses the following fundamental ideas:

1. The guideline for planning and for economic policies is to release all productive forces, exploit all potentials of the country and make the best use of foreign aid with a view to developing the productive forces while building up and strengthening the socialist relations of production.

2. To bring about basic changes in the present situation, we must restructure the economy and concentrate on three key economic programmes: production of food, consumer goods, and export goods. To this end economic forms suited for the period of transition should be devised. Concerning the relationships between the different sectors of the economy, "the socialist economy — state and collective — must grow vigorously and be able to play the key and guiding role, set good examples and organize good overall management".

3. "The Party and the State must bring about positive changes in matters of mechanism, policy and organization, so that collective and State-run economic establishments can function with efficiency".

We must resolutely do away with the centralized bureaucratic subsidy-based mechanism of management and shift to economic accounting and the socialist mode of enterprise. We must differentiate between the general function of the State as economic manager and the managerial function in production and business of the grassroots, and regard "the renewal of the managerial mechanism at the grassroots and the granting of autonomy to the latter as the key measure." This should be "the starting point for renovating management at higher State levels, not the other way round".

4. One of the laws governing the process of renewal is to devise the proper forms of transition. "To skip the necessary transitional steps would be a disastrous error. To recognize the necessity of such transitional steps does not mean to adopt an "eclectic" viewpoint, to "stand between two extremes, but to adopt the only correct viewpoint, one which conforms to the law governing the birth of the new."

5. In the process of changing over from the old to the new mechanism, each economic policy must be well coordinated with other policies and must be carefully calculated with a view to making steady steps in conformity with the objective conditions. For example, the distribution and circulation of goods are burning problems. However, since the Eighth Plenum of the Party Central Committee and despite four subsequent plenums, they have not yet been adequately solved. In this connection, the General Secretary says, "the distribution and circulation of goods are both a condition for and a result of production. Thus, this problem is closely connected with the process of production and the whole mechanism of economic management. In order to solve it properly we must take successive steps which will span a period of several years."

6. In our economic relations with other countries, "Soviet cooperation and assistance lie at the core of Vietnam's foreign economic strategy and constitute a major factor of socialist construction in our country." Here renewal requires that we should fully understand that "mutually beneficial cooperation and socialist economic accounting mean that responsibility is linked with interest on both sides: therefore we must resolutely do away with the spirit of over-reliance and dependence on others, which affects not a few of our cadres and people"; "we should promptly revamp the

mechanism of cooperation in conformity with the new spirit".

7. Renewal involves a persevering and complicated struggle between the new and the old, the advanced and the backward, the positive and the negative. "To step up the struggle against negative phenomena is an important measure aimed at making people live and work in conformity with the law, and at restoring order and discipline in all activities of the Party, the State and in society. We should cause light to repel darkness and shine everywhere".

8. We must constantly heighten vigilance and foil all schemes hatched by the enemy who is carrying out against our country a multi-faceted war of sabotage, "chiefly economic sabotage."

9. The key problem is to renew organizational and cadre work. The people and the revolution urgently need an efficient and healthy apparatus. Therefore we must start a campaign to purify the Party, raise its combativeness, and the managerial efficiency of the State apparatus, and make for healthy social relations.

10. Revolution is the work of the masses. While bringing into full play the superiority of socialism, namely, the "high-level organization and centralism brought about by public ownership", we should make the best use of another of its strong points: "Once they are liberated the working people become the real masters of the country, and create huge forces to defend and build it." To this end, we must ensure real mastery for the people in all respects and seriously enforce the motto "let the people know about, discuss, take part in and control (public affairs)". Democratization is the essence of, and the condition for renewal.

* * *

In the process of renewal, our Party, a strong and experienced Marxist-Leninist Party, fights on two fronts: against both leftist and rightist tendencies. This has been made clear by the General Secretary: "The main basis for our efforts is the spirit of renewal upheld by the Sixth National Party Congress: We are determined never to go back to the centralized bureaucratic subsidy-based system of management, and never to rush headlong into the road called by many people that of "loose mechanisms". We should never under cover of "democracy" adopt departmentalist and parochialist viewpoints. Our principled stand requires that we should base our efforts on the common interests, the interests of the whole society and the whole country. For only by resolving the problems facing the whole society and the whole country, can we create the necessary conditions for solving the concrete problems of each sector, each locality and each branch. On the other hand, we should not, under the pretext of solving new problems arising from life, which a given locality or branch is faced with, and in which there may be both positive and negative elements, and in the name of "centralism", discipline and order, impose rigid, conservative measures that do not conform to objective realities. It is precisely at the present time that we should think in a new way so as to arrive at a new and correct conception of the relationship between centralism and democracy.

PHAM THANH

## CAN CARDIO – VASCULAR...

*(Continued from page 2)*

Asked about his aspiration, he said that he eagerly hoped that the public health service would look into his work and give him the necessary assistance so that he could better serve the people. In order to be efficacious the treatment of cardio-vascular disorders requires the help of the State and modern Western medicine, he said, adding: "Only in this way can the many difficulties I encounter in research and application be removed."

At present, besides working as an economist in an Export Company based in Ho Chi Minh City, Hoang Van Hung, 38, also treats patients at home. His apartment at No. 182/27, Bach Dang Road, Binh Thanh district, is well-known to many patients to whom he has brought back health and happiness.

HOANG NGOC

# CONGRESS OF VIETNAMESE PEASANTS: BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS

The first Congress of the Vietnam Peasants' Union was convened at a time when the country was faced with many difficulties springing in particular from a continued decrease in agricultural output. This situation directly affects not only the nearly fifty million peasants but also all other social strata.

The food problem has become the most burning issue. The peasant question and agricultural production have become the subjects of heated debate, particularly in the mass media. Revolutionary stalwarts and skeptics alike feel that something has gone awry in the countryside even though all agree that the patriotism of the peasantry and their confidence in the Communist Party are beyond question.

The decrease in food production has led to an ever lower percentage of agricultural commodities in total production. The reversion to food autarky, the parcelling out of the agricultural-product, especially food, market and monoculture remain urgent unsolved problems.

One main cause has been the absence of a correct strategy for socio-economic development in general, and for agricultural development in particular, which could have helped lay the foundation for a rational industrial-agricultural structure. In Vietnam, for a decade now the slogan "Agriculture is the forefront of the economic battle" has remained an empty one. Agriculture has received little attention, and has in fact been neglected. There has been no effective plan to supply it with the necessary materials and implements, and the required scientific and technical assistance. The result has been very slow progress. On the other hand, people driven by hastiness and subjectivism have wanted to quickly put the whole of agricultural production under collective and State management. This has hampered the development of the household economy in the rural areas. To make matters worse, the bureaucratic, centralized, and subsidy-based system of management and an egalitarian system of distribution, long regarded as sacrosanct, have led to widespread irresponsibility and put a brake on productive forces in State farms and most agricultural cooperatives. The situation has been compounded by erroneous social and economic policies towards the peasants, by theft and wastefulness in the supply of materials to agriculture, and by the cumbersome and inefficient managerial apparatus at all levels. The application of science and technology has been hindered by the reluctance of scientific and technical workers to go and work in the countryside. Last but not least, negative phenomena in rural administrations have multiplied: theft of public property and bullying of the peasant masses by cadres are daily occurrences.

Little can be done by the peasants to cope with this alarming situation. The organisation of the Peasants' Union* is far from being completed. In many localities it is not yet officially recognized by Party and State authorities. Beset with material difficulties and deprived of moral and legal support, the peasants find themselves in a dire predicament. In many areas, unable to pay tax and debt arrears, large numbers of them have left their fields and become petty traders. Many social evils which have been basically eradicated again rear their heads. Superstition is rife.

The Sixth Party Congress and subsequent meetings of the Central Committee of the Party have laid down the following line of action for overcoming difficulties in agricultural production and solving the peasant question: to restructure agriculture by properly combining specialisation with diversification of crops; combining crop with livestock raising; agriculture, forestry and fishery with industry and transport, especially with processing industries, small-scale industries and handicrafts in the rural areas, to ease the flow of commodities between different regions of the country and from foreign markets; to strengthen the material and technical foundations of agriculture.

These measures will in time strongly develop food production especially in the Mekong river delta (two million hectares of rice land) and the Red River delta. Low-productivity crops must be promptly replaced by cash crops of higher economic value.

At present, many rice-growing areas are yielding 7-8 tonnes and even up to 10 tonnes of paddy per hectare per year (two crops). But in many other areas, rice yields remain very low. Therefore, crop multiplication, intensive farming and the opening of more land to cultivation must constitute a long-term endeavour.

Besides, food belts must be developed around Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and other major urban and industrial centres; areas under short-term industrial crops must be expanded in order to create employment and quickly reap economic benefits; likewise, we must broaden the areas under perennial industrial crops such as coffee, tea, rubber, coconut, cinnamon, pepper... as well as fruit trees, along with the building of more processing factories. In the mountain regions, along with afforestation, the planting of perennial and short-term industrial crops, cattle raising, building more roads and expanding trade, we must promote the sedentarization of nomadic ethnic groups, and entrust the management of forest land to cooperatives, production collectives and peasant families in order to make the most of our forest resources for the benefit of both the State and the population. In coastal areas and on offshore islands we must seek to exploit more effectively our maritime resources and promote such activities as salt making and maritime transport.

A question of prime importance is to consolidate and broaden the socialist relations of production and correctly utilise the other economic sectors. State enterprises in agriculture, forestry and fishery must be self-supporting, operate with profit, and cease to rely on State subsidies. For a long time, State-run establishments operating with a loss have continued in existence and have even been expanded, leading to disastrous consequences. They must be either disbanded or converted to a more appropriate form of ownership. Lands owned by State farms but left uncultivated must be loaned to the peasants. The third plenum of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party held in late August 1987 issued a resolution on the application in State farms of the system of socialist economic accounting.

The renovation of the organisation and management of cooperatives and production collectives has become an urgent problem. It is high time we realized that they are voluntary economic organisations of peasants, who should not be coerced into joining them.

The size and type of a cooperative must be in harmony with local geographical and other conditions as well as the managerial and technological abilities of local cadres.

Since the Sixth Party Congress, the wind of democratization has been blowing in our country, in the countryside in particular. The sad fact is that there has appeared in the Vietnamese countryside a new breed "of village tyrants» who place themselves above and in opposition to the working masses. At the First Congress of the Vietnam Peasants' Union, CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh said: «To ensure for the peasants a genuine right to mastery will encourage them to produce more and take part in the building of their native region and their homeland, just as they have in the past devoted all their strength and energies to defending national independence and freedom. To this end democratization and openness are indispensable".

Democratization and openness mean that the working peasants are to participate in management and to supervise the activities of the managerial cadres of cooperatives and production groups.

Only then can an end be gradually put to embezzlement, arbitrariness and oppression of the masses. The production plans of agricultural co-ops and production collectives must be democratically discussed at congresses of their members and an end be put to the imposition of production plans from above and to arbitrary decisions by the managing board. On the other hand, to promote self-management, the State should work out an effective system of economic incentives and issue strict managerial regulations.

Co-ops and production collectives must be allowed to buy (or sell if they are unused) properties (excluding agricultural land, forest land and water areas but including draught animals and small machines) and be given priority in the purchase of properties not used or not needed by State farms. Farming cooperatives may borrow from banks and credit cooperatives, enter into joint ventures or cooperation with other units or individuals, raise funds from the public including relatives of their members living abroad. They may open accounts at the Foreign Trade Bank if they have large revenues in foreign currencies. After paying their taxes, agricultural co-ops and production collectives are put on an equal footing with State-economic organisations in their dealings with them. They may procure the necessary materials to broaden their operations. They are free to market their products after paying their taxes and fulfilling their delivery commitments to State enterprises. They have the right to export their products and import the necessary materials and equipment through State agencies.

In crop cultivation it is necessary to readjust the areas of land allocated to peasants under the contract system and put an end to the present parcelling out in order to ensure that the contracting farmers may work on stable areas for about 15 years and deliver stable quotas for five years. It is also high time an end was put to egalitarianism and subsidization in distribution. In 1988 the State will issue a Statute of Agricultural Cooperatives, an amended Statute of Fishing Cooperatives, and prepare for the promulgation of the Law on Cooperatives.

Another major question at the congress, which was touched upon by General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh is that all strata of the population should be encouraged to develop the household economy including gardening, livestock breeding, raising of aquatic products, handicrafts, and services. The State recognizes the prolonged existence and positive effect of individual and private economies in the period of transition to socialism. It encourages all forms of cooperation on the basis of free consent and mutual benefit. It may lease or allocate a certain amount of farm land, forest land and water areas to individual families, for periods varying from one to two production cycles for forest land and land under perennial industrial crops and from 15 to 20 years for water areas and land under annual industrial crops.

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The economy, especially agriculture is meeting with serious difficulties; inflation continues unabated; prices are sky-rocketing; and the confidence of the people has been eroded. Everything calls for a serious reorganisation of agriculture.

The Congress has worked out the programme of action of the broadest politico-social organization of the Vietnamese people at present. Nevertheless, even the most optimistic people could not hope that the newly-elected executive committee of the Peasants' Union would be able to quickly improve the situation in agriculture. But in a country where 80 per cent of the population are peasants and where rice production remains the yardstick of any improvement in the people's living standard, the official coming into being of an organization comprising more than ten million members is a major political event.

TRAN LE

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• *Grassroots organisations of the Union of Collective Peasants had existed for decades in most localities, under the leadership of the Central Preparatory Committee for the Congress of Collective Peasants.*

# VIETNAM – USSR TRADE AND SHIPPING RELATIONS GROW STEADILY

Thirty years ago an agreement on trade and shipping was signed in Hanoi between Vietnam and the USSR.

Following the agreement on economic and technical aid for Vietnam signed between the two governments on 18 July 1955 on the occasion of a friendship visit to the Soviet Union by a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation headed by President Ho Chi Minh, this agreement marked a turning point in the development of trade and shipping relations between the two countries. Under this agreement the two sides granted each other the status of the most favoured nation.

Together with the great and multi-sided assistance given Vietnam by the Soviet Union, goods exchanges between the two countries have increasingly developed both in range and intensity. Compared with the 1958 figures the volume of goods exchanges between them has increased 200 times; Vietnam's exports 30 times. In the past Vietnamese exports to the Soviet Union consisted mainly of raw materials and agricultural products; it now includes many processed items with higher exchange value. The Soviet Union has always accorded us fraternal assistance, and at present it is Vietnam's biggest trading partner, accounting for 80 per cent of the total value of Vietnam's foreign-trade exchanges with member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. The Soviet Union supplies Vietnam with large quantities of goods serving the development of its national economy; 68 per cent of them consist of fuels and materials including oil, cotton, rolled steel, fertilizers, equipment and machinery and consumer goods. Equipment, materials, and consumer goods imported from the Soviet Union have been helping our efforts to overcome imbalances in our national economy, stabilize our production, increase our exports and build the material and technical bases of socialism. The Soviet Union has helped Vietnam build, restore and expand 300 projects including some of special importance, such as the hydro-electric power plants at Hoa Binh and Tri An, the Pha Lai thermo-electric power plant, the Bim Son cement factory, the Lam Thao superphosphate plant, etc. Soviet-built plants and enterprises are producing 47 per cent of our electricity, 85 per cent of our coal, 52 per cent of our tin, 100 per cent of our apatite, 50 per cent of our cement and 37 per cent of our processed tea.

For its part, Vietnam sends most of its exports to the Soviet Union. Exports to the Soviet Union in recent years represent 60 per cent of our natural rubber, 58 per cent of our tea, 59 per cent of our coffee, 42 per cent of our canned fruit, 100 per cent of our flooring, etc. Besides, the Soviet Union imports large quantities of Vietnam's industrial and handicraft products.

Apart from regular foreign-trade exchanges, trade relations between the two countries have been broadened to include such new forms as exchanges of home-trade goods and extra-protocol deliveries between foreign-trade services of the two countries aimed at supplying each other with materials and goods serving production and life.

At present, Vietnam- USSR trade relations have entered a new period in which they develop on the basis of cooperation in every field of economic life: engineering, electronics, mining, chemistry, metallurgy, energy, light industry, transport and communications, planting and processing of tropical industrial crops. The Vietnam-USSR Oil and Gas Joint Enterprise has begun to produce and its output will increase in the coming years.

The achievements scored in trade relations over the past thirty years are closely related with the important contributions of Soviet shipping, during the war years, and especially after railway communications with the outside world were cut off. The cargoes transported by Soviet ships to Vietnam average 4 — 5 million tonnes each year.

The allround cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union is facing bright prospects. The official friendship visit to the Soviet Union by a Vietnamese Party and Government delegation headed by General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh in May 1987 was a very important political event marking a new development in Vietnam-USSR cooperation relations.

Based on a renewal of thinking and of the structure of cooperation, relations between the two countries have developed in depth and correspond to the requirements of the new stage.

In order to create favourable conditions for further cooperation, in 1987 and early 1988, many important documents were signed by the two governments, laying the groundwork for direct economic ties between the two countries at all levels — government, branch and enterprise.

Cooperation programmes with the Soviet Union will allow Vietnam to take a broader and more effective part in the international division of labour and in socialist economic association. They will also help our economy achieve greater efficiency.

THANG TAM

# VIETNAM STANDS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE WITH CHINA OVER THE TRUONG SA AND HOANG SA ARCHIPELAGOES

Editor's note: *In April 1988, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam published an important document entitled "The Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes and International Law".*

*The document consists of three parts:*

1. *Vietnam's case versus China's case regarding the Hoang Sa (Paracel) and Truong Sa (Spratly) Archipelagoes.*
2. *Stands taken by other countries on "China's sovereignty" over the two archipelagoes.*
3. *Peaceful negotiations: The most appropriate way of settling disputes over the two archipelagoes.*

*Below are excerpts from this document. The title is ours.*

In the course of the settlement of disputes between various countries in the world on the sovereignty over ownerless territories (res nullius), a principle of international law on the assertion of territorial sovereignty has been formulated: The principle of effectivity. This principle lies at present at the core of customary international law. In Asia, Africa, Europe, America and the Pacific region, numerous disputes over territorial sovereignty have been settled on the basis of the principle of effectivity. The most famous case among these settlements was one involving the United States and the Netherlands on the status of Palmas Island under the arbitration of Max Huber 60 years ago. The conclusions of this settlement and others including the Minquiers and Ecrehous case between Britain and France, the Clipperton Island case between Mexico and France, the East Greenland case between Norway and Denmark, etc., have become criteria to assert sovereignty over ownerless (res nullius) and abandoned (res derelicta) territories. Effective occupation and effective, continuous and peaceful exercise of State authority entitle to sovereignty.

Meanwhile, outdated or inappropriate views have been discarded, for example:

— The right of discovery and the right of first occupancy; the principle of fictive occupation. (A discovery will result only in an imperfect title, i.e., an "embryonic" title. To be effective, such a title needs to be perfected over a reasonable period of time through effective occupation and effective administration of the discovered territory).

— Occupation by private individuals will not entitle their country to territorial sovereignty. Only the State can be the title-holder of the occupation.

— An occupation through conquest (de bellatio) will not entitle to territorial sovereignty over the conquered territory.

To reach an objective and impartial conclusion on the sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes, it is necessary to set the Vietnamese and Chinese respective cases against the norms of the principle of effectivity: effective occupation; effective, continuous and peaceful exercise of State authority.

Viet Nam's case is that it has maintained effective occupation of the two archipelagoes at least since the XVIIth century when they were not under the sovereignty of any country and the Vietnamese State has exercised effectively, continuously and peacefully its sovereignty over the two archipelagoes until the time when they were invaded by the Chinese armed forces.

It was recorded in *Toan Tap Thien Nam Tu Chi Lo Do Thu* (Route Maps from the Capital to the Four Directions) by Do Ba Cong Dao in the XVIIth century that at least by that century the map of Viet Nam had designated the two archipelagoes by a single name Bai Cat Vang and placed them within the administrative confines of Binh Son district, Quang Nghia prefecture. Bai Cat Vang was then otherwise known as Hoang Sa, Con Vang, Truong Sa, Dai Hoang Sa, Dai Truong Sa, Van ly Truong Sa, etc., and now as Hoang Sa and Truong Sa.

Viet Nam had consolidated its occupation and established its sovereignty by organizing Hoang Sa brigades for the purposes of exploitation in a State capacity. Each brigade comprised 70 members whose annual task it was to collect in Hoang Sa over a period of 6 months such sea products as holothurians, turtles, precious conches and retrieve from wrecked ships in the vicinity of these archipelagoes such commodities as gold and silver coins, guns and ammunitions, tin, porcelain and glass wares... Do Ba Cong Dao's book and dozens of others like *Phu Bien Tap Luc* (1776) (Miscellaneous Records on the Pacification of the Frontiers), *Dai Nam Thuc Luc Tien Bien va Chinh Bien* (1844-1848) (Truthful Accounts about Dai Nam Former and Present Dynasties), *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi* (1882) (Geography of Unified Dai Nam) and official annals of the National Institute of History under the Imperial Court of Hue, *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi* (1821) (Collection of Regulations under Successive Dynasties), *Hoang Viet Dia*

*Du Chi* (1833) (Geographical Treatise of Imperial Viet Nam), all had written about Hoang Sa and its exploitation by Hoang Sa brigades. Regulations on recruitment, tribute, reward and remuneration of Hoang Sa brigades had all been clearly defined by the State.

The Hoang Sa brigades were later reinforced by the Bac Hai brigades and they operated continuously during the reigns of the Nguyen Lords (1558-1783) and until the Tay Son (1786-1802) and Nguyen (1802-1945) dynasties.

(...)

After the establishment of her protectorate over Viet Nam by virtue of the June 6, 1884 Treaty, France administered the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa in the name of Viet Nam.

At the beginning, the French authorities had a project for a lighthouse on the Hoang Sa archipelago, carried out naval patrols in the waters of the two archipelagoes to ensure security and committed customs ships to combatting smuggling. They allowed the Japanese to collect guano on the Hoang Sa islands. Between 1925 and 1927 the Oceanographical Institute at Nha Trang commissioned S/S De Lanessan to carry out oceanographical, geological and biological studies in the two archipelagoes successively.

Between 1930 and 1932 the Inconstant, Alerte and La Malicieuse warships and also S/S De Lanessan made several voyages to Hoang Sa.

(...)

On her return to Indochina after the Second World War, France demanded in early 1947 that the armed forces of the Republic of China be withdrawn from the archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa which they had illegally occupied in late 1946, and brought in French forces to replace the Chinese troops. France also had the meteorological station and the wireless station rebuilt.

At the 1951 San Francisco Conference — attended by 51 countries — on the Peace Treaty with Japan, the Head of the Delegation of the State of Viet Nam under French patronage in a statement reaffirmed Vietnamese sovereignty over the two archipelagoes. No objections were raised nor any reservations made against his statement at the Conference.

(...)

So far, China has mainly based herself on historical occurrences to present her case, arguing that:

China was the first to discover, exploit and govern Jiuruluozhou, Shitang, Tianli Shitang, Wanli Shitang, Wanli Changsha... which purportedly correspond to Xisha and Nansha today, and for thousands of years successive Chinese dynasties and administrations have been continuously exercising their rule over these two archipelagoes.

(...)

In former times it was not only the Chinese, but also the Vietnamese, the Malays, the Persians, the Arabs... who made voyages to and from the waters of the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes. There is no proof that no other people had discovered these two archipelagoes before the Chinese did.

Discovery and exploitation by "the people" will not, under international law, result in the assertion of national sovereignty. Even the discovery by States confers but an embryonic, imperfect title, which becomes complete only if subsequent activities are undertaken by these States to demonstrate their will to exercise their jurisdiction.

(...)

Beijing has cited the astronomical surveys by the Yuan dynasty (XIIIth century) in Nanhai to conclude that the Xisha archipelago lay within Chinese territory under the Yuan.

Nevertheless, it is written in the official history of the Yuan dynasty itself that the Chinese domain under the Yuan dynasty extended only to Hainan Island in the south and not beyond the Gobi desert in the north, that is to say, it did not include the islands which China calls Xisha today.

Moreover, the measurements carried out by the Yuan dynasty at 27 points included territories of other countries, such as Gaoli (Korea), Tiele (Soviet Siberia), Nanhai. If these were regarded as a legal basis of China's sovereignty, this could lead to Chinese claims on more distant territories including those in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the URSS.

China has cited a patrol cruise by Vice-Admiral Wu Sheng in the years 1710-1712 or so during the Qing dynasty alleging that Vice-Admiral Wu Sheng himself set out from Qiongya, proceeding to Tonggu, Qizhouyang, and Sigengsha, making a three-thousand-mile tour of inspection. On this basis, China asserts that Qizhouyang is the present-day Xisha archipelago area which was then patrolled by naval units of Guangtung province.

All the names of Qiongya, Tonggu, Sigengsha are names of localities on the coast of Hainan island, while Qizhouyang is a maritime zone lying between the Northeastern coast of Hainan island and the group of seven islets situated to the Northeast of Hainan (See the 1/500,000 scale sea map published by China in Chinese and Vietnamese languages, the *Map of Leizhou peninsula and Hainan island* and the *Topographical Map of Nanhai* printed by the Chinese Cartological Publishing House in May 1984.

So, that was just an inspection tour *around Hainan island*. Beijing's conclusions are obviously contrary to historical and geographical facts.

— About the "*tour of inspection*" around the Xisha archipelago by Admiral Li Zhun in 1909 referred to by Beijing:

The blitz landing and pulling out of Chinese troops on some islands of the Hoang Sa archipelago ordered by Admiral Li Zhun was a violation of Vietnamese sovereignty and absolutely cannot be regarded as an exercise of Chinese "sovereignty".

That "tour of inspection" and all the subsequent activities of the Government of the Republic of China or the Government of the People's Republic of China, supposedly aimed at asserting Chinese "rule" over the Hoang Sa or Truong Sa archipelago, took place at a time when these two archipelagoes already belonged to Viet Nam. All the three occurrences as cited by China were, on the one hand, distortions of historical and geographical facts and, on the other, had no connections with the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes of Viet Nam.

(...)

Comparing the respective cases of Viet Nam and China, one can see that: China has never administered the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes and it is all the more impossible to say that China has exercised effectively, continuously and peacefully her "sovereignty" over these islands. The claim of Chinese sovereignty is one that China has not up to now been able to prove.

The State of Viet Nam has *effectively* occupied the two archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa since at least the XVIIth century and has *effectively, continuously* and *peacefully* exercised its sovereigny over them ever since.

(...)

Beijing stresses that Viet Nam itself has "recognized" the Xisha and Nansha Islands as Chinese territories. It cites as evidence a view expressed in 1956 by Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam Ung Van Khiem, a note in 1958 of Prime Minister Pham Van Dong approving the statement by the People's Republic of China on her 12-nautical-mile wide territorial waters and the statement in 1965 of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam protesting the United States' delimitation of the fighting zone of the U.S. armed forces in Indochina and which said the zone impinged on "the Xisha maritime area of China".

(...)

It is true that the above-mentioned facts have occurred. But it is necessary to replace them exactly in their historical context. These facts happened between 1956 and 1965 when Viet Nam had to fight against U.S. intervention and aggression.

(...)

Right after the conclusion of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina, the Vietnamese people had to fight against U.S. intervention and aggression in South Viet Nam. Since 1965 the U.S. had been waging a local war in the South and at the same time conducting an aerial war of destruction in the North with the whole of its enormous military power. The Vietnamese people therefore had to do whatever they could to defeat the war of aggression and, were determined not to forfeit their country once again. To the entire nation of Viet Nam this was a matter of life and death.

During this period, China considered U.S. imperialism her chief enemy, resolutely backed Viet Nam in its struggle against the U.S. and proclaimed herself "the rear of the Vietnamese people". China was among the countries which provided Viet Nam with the greatest volume of aid. Viet Nam and China became true allies in their common struggle against the U.S. Their relations were "as close as lips to teeth".

In such a life-and-death struggle against an aggressor whose military strength far surpassed its own, the more Viet Nam could rely on China's attachment to Vietnam's struggle to prevent the U.S. from using these two archipelagoes as well as the Bien Dong Sea against it, the better. In that spirit and against that background should the above-mentioned statement be understood.

Viet Nam trusted China in all sincerity and believed that after the war all territorial problems would be suitably resolved between those who were "at the same time comrades and brothers".

During the war of resistance against the French, in 1949 the Vietnamese armed forces drove the Kuomintang troops out of Chusan (Chinese territory), liberated this region and handed it over to the Chinese People's Liberation Army afterwards. In the same spirit, entitled to take over Northern Viet Nam under the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina, the Vietnamese Government asked China to administer on Vietnam's behalf Bach Long Vi Island in the Bac Bo (Tonkin) Gulf and then regained its administration over the island in 1957. Viet Nam put so much confidence in China that when the latter helped Viet Nam to reconstruct the railway between Ha Noi and Dong Dang, the Viet Nam Railway Board even accepted a document saying that the point of junction of the two countries' railways would go "beyond the national border line" as far as 316 meters into Vietnamese territory in comparison with the official border line between the two countries as was defined in the May 25, 1955 Sino-Vietnamese railway agreement.

We adopted the same attitude towards our Lao brothers. During the initial stage of its war of resistance against the U.S. Viet Nam spared parts of its territory such as Na Meo (Thanh Hoa province) and Keng Du (Nghe An province) to Lao patriotic forces for use as bases. The Lao patriotic forces similarly agreed to let Viet Nam build the Ho Chi Minh trail on part of Lao territory adjacent to Viet Nam. After the war against the U.S., the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic satisfactorily resolved together all related questions. Viet Nam handed back to Laos all territories it had borrowed from Laos and vice-versa. On July 18, 1977, the two countries signed an agreement on national border delimitation, on the basis of respect for the border line existing in 1945 when the two countries declared independence.

However, the relations between Viet Nam and China have not developed as well as the Vietnamese people hoped. The People's Republic of China in 1971 received Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and in 1972 signed the Shanghai Joint Communiqué with President Richard Nixon: these events resulted in China turning friend into foe and vice-versa and in China's collusion with the U.S. in its strategy against the Vietnamese people aimed at preventing the Vietnamese people from completely liberating South Viet Nam and achieving national reunification. Along with the escalation of provocative acts and land-grabbing operations along the land border, in January 1974, Beijing used a military force to attack and occupy the remaining Western group of islands of the Hoang Sa archipelago. With the war by proxy of

the genocidal Polpot clique in Southwestern Viet Nam and the war involving 600,000 Chinese troops in the Northern border regions of Viet Nam, Beijing has brought the Sino-Vietnamese relations to their worst. The realities of the last ten years and more have clearly shown that China has turned the tables, switching friends and foes and brazenly carrying out an anti-Viet Nam policy.

In short, Beijing's claims over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes are without historical and legal grounds. Chinese actions in the Hoang Sa archipelago previously and in the Truong Sa archipelago at present, in fact are part of China's expansionist and hegemonist policy towards Viet Nam and Southeast Asia.

Throughout the past thousands of years, China has never exercised sovereignty over these two archipelagoes. What China did though was by the gradual use of military force between 1956 and 1974 to occupy the Hoang Sa archipelago. And what she has been doing since January 1988 is to begin occupying a number of reefs in Viet Nam's Truong Sa, again by use of military force.

(...)

As regards the Vietnamese archipelagoes of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, during the last thirty-two years, China has on three occasions resorted to the use of force in order to invade them: in 1956 the Eastern sector of Hoang Sa; in 1974 the Western sector of that archipelago; and in 1988 a number of rocks and reefs in the Truong Sa archipelago. It even went as far as impudently demanding that Viet Nam withdraw from the islands of Vietnam's Truong Sa archipelago.

China's gunboat policy violates international law and goes counter to the trend towards the peaceful settlement of all disputes in State-to-State relations now prevailing in the world and in the region.

In the face of China's policy of reliance on the use of force, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is determined to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and at the same time, respects the principle of refraining from the threat to use force or the use of force to settle disputes, consistently advocating the settlement of all disputes between the two countries, including the one concerning the two archipelagoes, through peaceful negotiations. In line with this principled position, back in 1978 the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam reached agreements with ASEAN countries, namely with Malaysia and the Philippines, to settle all differences, including territorial questions, through negotiations in a spirit of conciliation and friendship.

With China, from the outset, Viet Nam has put forth proposals for the settlement of disputes through negotiations in a spirit of equality, mutual respect, friendship and good neighbourliness (point 3, three-point position of January 26, 1974, reaffirmed in 1975 and 1976 and at Viet Nam — China talks at Deputy-Foreign Ministerial level during 1977 and 1978). Regrettably, the Chinese side neither responded to these proposals nor put into effect the statement by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (then Deputy Premier):

*"Between the two countries there exists a dispute over the two archipelagoes which can be an object of discussion between the two sides."* (talks between the late General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam Le Duan and Deputy Premier Deng Xiaoping, September 24, 1975).

In the face of the extremely serious situation in the Truong Sa archipelago area, since March, 1988, Viet Nam has three times proposed to the Chinese side to open talks for the settlement of differences concerning the Truong Sa archipelago and other disputes over the common border and the Hoang Sa archipelago (Notes respectively dated March 17 and March 23, 1988); at the same time it proposed that pending the settlement of disputes by means of negotiations, *"the two sides should refrain from the use of force to settle disputes and avoid any clashes that may aggravate the situation"* (Note dated March 26, 1988).

The above-mentioned proposals successively put forth by Viet Nam reflect the Vietnamese people and Government's self-restraint, constructive position and attitude of good-will for the sake of peace. The Chinese authorities slanderously label the Vietnamese proposals "hypocritical" in order to reject negotiations with Viet Nam and have not responded to Viet Nam's proposal that the two sides undertake not to use force to settle disputes. All this shows that China continues implementing a policy of hostility against Viet Nam, and continues its acts of usurpation in the Truong Sa archipelago. In the meantime China has declared that she is prepared to settle early border questions with other countries. This pertains to China's traditional "divide-and-rule" policy.

The developments of the situation since the March 14, 1988 incident up to the present day point to all the dangers inherent in China's policy of reliance on the use of force.

A peaceful settlement of the dispute over the archipelagoes of Truong Sa and Hoang Sa would respond to the desire for peace of the peoples of Viet Nam and China, in conformity with the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, with the interest of peace, stability and co-operation in Southeast Asia, the Asian-Pacific region and the whole world. This is the most correct way. Public opinion in Southeast Asia and in the whole world is looking forward to China's positive response. Being one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, China has a major obligation to abide by the United Nations Charter. ●

# FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL ESTEEM

Nicolae Ceausescu, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party and President of the Socialist Republic of Rumania, paid an official friendship visit to Vietnam from 17 to 19 April 1988. This event is a vivid manifestation of friendship and cooperation between the two Parties, States and peoples.

A *Joint Communiqué* was published following talks between the Party and Government delegations of Vietnam and Rumania. At the talks, General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh and General Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu informed each other about socialist construction in their respective countries, and examined the relations between them and the prospects for their development. The two sides had fruitful exchanges of views on important problems in international life and in the world communist and workers' movement.

The Vietnamese people highly value the important achievements of the fraternal Rumanian people. More than 40 years after its liberation, at present Rumania is a developed industrial and agricultural country with a modern industry and a large-scale agriculture, whose people's living conditions have been improving day by day. In comparison with 1944, industrial production has increased by 115 times, agricultural production, five times, and the national income, 32 times. The real incomes of the working people have increased by seven times compared with 1950. The eighth five-year plan (1986-1990) marks the continuous development of the country. Industrial output will increase by ten per cent and agricultural output by 20 per cent. In 1987, foodgrain production was 31.7 million tonnes — the highest output so far in the history of the country. Rumania's important achievements in socialist construction have contributed to consolidating the socialist community.

The National Congress of the Rumanian Communist Party held in mid-December 1987 was a landmark of great significance in the advance of socialist Rumania. At the Congress, the Rumanian communists summed up their socialist construction, took stock of the difficulties and the new problems, and decided on measures to overcome those difficulties in order to take the country forward and implement the resolution of the 13th Party Congress.

The Vietnamese people always bear in mind that solidarity and all-sided cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries are important factors ensuring the triumph of our own revolution. The mutual visits by delegations of the Parties, States and National Assemblies of Vietnam and Rumania and the agreements on economic cooperation and trade between them have contributed to the consolidation of solidarity and cooperation between the two countries. The visit this time to Vietnam by General Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu, Comrade Elena Ceausescu, and other Rumanian comrades will contribute to further consolidating and strengthening the solidarity, friendship and cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

# FINE DEVELOPMENTS IN VIETNAM – INDIA RELAITONS

During his official friendship visit to Vietnam in late 1985, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had said, "Vietnam and India should resolutely struggle for the freedom of all nations, for peace and security and for mutual understanding among nations." His recent visit to Vietnam in April 1988 was an occasion for him to renew his wishes, which conform to the aspirations of both nations. We once again express our esteem and admiration for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the clear-sighted and dynamic leader of the great Indian people, the brilliant successor of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi. He is a great friend of the Vietnamese people. We highly value the achievements recorded by the Indian people in national construction and defence, their efforts for the consolidation of the Non-Aligned Movement, for peace, and for elevating India's position in the international arena.

The Vietnamese and Indian leaders have exchanged views and reached agreement on the development of relationships between the two countries and on major regional and international issues of mutual concern.

We are elated to note that the age-old friendship between Vietnam and India has grown ever closer

with the passage of time. As Prime Minister R. Gandhi once said: "India has always stood by the side of Vietnam in her struggles, and now she continues to stand by Vietnam in national construction.". In recent years, the two countries have fruitfully cooperated in many fields: agriculture, animal husbandry, railways, oil and gas exploration, textile industry, science and technology, etc. The Rice Institute at O Mon, the Murrha milk buffaloes, the Indira Gandhi Textile Mill, the agreement on oil and gas cooperation, the low-interest loans and emergency aid to Vietnam by the Indian Government, etc., all these are concrete and vivid manifestations of the increasing cooperation between Vietnam and India. The visits to India by our leaders and the visits to Vietnam by Indian leaders have instilled new vitality into relations between the two countries. For four decades now, India has been a constant messenger of peace and friendship. At present, the Vietnamese people are striving to overcome difficulties in order to implement the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress aimed at stabilizing the country's socio-economic situation. At the same time we are defending our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. As General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh stressed, the presence of the Indian Prime Minister in these days of great significance in the city bearing the name of President Ho Chi Minh, who together with the late Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had laid the groundwork for and painstakingly built up friendship between the Vietnamese and Indian peoples, this presence was a noble gesture and a vivid manifestation of the solidarity and mutual support which have always bound the two peoples together in their common struggle. Our people consider this event as a great source of encouragement.

Together with other nations in the world, we uphold the important role of India in the common struggle for peace, security, and international cooperation. India has made great contributions to the Non-Aligned Movement, to the struggle for peace, security, and cooperation in Asia and the world over. That peace-loving country has put forward many peace initiatives which have won strong and worldwide support. In particular, it has made continuous efforts in the search for a just solution to the Kampuchea issue. The Vietnamese people note with satisfaction that the increasing development, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, of the multiform cooperation between Vietnam and India has become a model for South-South cooperation. Facts have shown that Vietnamese-Indian relations constitute an important factor of peace, stability, cooperation and development in Asia and the Pacific.

On this occasion, the Vietnamese people once again reiterate their full support for India's just stand and her goodwill attitude in the defence of her independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for her efforts to improve relations with her neighbours for the sake of peace and cooperation in South Asia and Asia as a whole, and to turn the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

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## VIETNAM SUPPORTS THE SOVIET STAND IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE AFGHAN ISSUE

Vietnam welcomes the peaceful solution of the Afghan issue on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and an end to all outside interference. The signing of documents on a political solution to the Afghan issue constitutes a legal basis on which to end the present conflict, and bring peace to the Afghan people. The important point is that the parties concerned must seriously implement their commitments. The struggle of the Afghan people against the schemes of hostile forces and for genuine self-determination will still meet with obstacles but will certainly be victorious. In that spirit, the Party, Government and people of Vietnam support the Soviet stand as expounded in the Soviet statement of 27 April. We call on the signatories to the documents to fulfil their commitments in order to bring genuine peace to the Afghan people thus contributing to peace and stability in the region. Once again, the Party, Government and people of Vietnam affirm their solidarity with and strong support for the cause of national construction and defence of the fraternal Afghan people, and in the period ahead for their struggle against the sabotage schemes in defence of the achievements of the Afghan revolution.

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# CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION IN VIETNAM ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS

*Editor's note: Below is an interview with Building Minister* Phan Ngoc Tuong *on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of his department published in* Tuan Tin Tuc, *a weekly journal in Vietnamese. The title is ours.*

*Question:*

Comrade Minister, your department will commemorate its 30th anniversary on 29 April. Would you tell our readers something about this event?

*Answer:* Given the difficulties facing our country we won't organize a formal and costly commemoration. We shall hold discussions at grassroots level to draw experience from both our achievements and shortcomings.

*Question:* What are those?

*Answer:* First, just a few words about our achievements. Over the past thirty years our department has played the main part in building the material bases for socialism and for national defence. The many achievements recorded have been praiseworthy. Our department has grown in size, in numbers, in scientific, technical and managerial skills, and in its material infrastructure. Such major works as the Hoa Binh hydro-electric plant, the Vung Tau oil and gas complex, the Lao Cai apatite mine... are evidence of its vitality.

As for our difficulties, weaknesses, shortcomings and mistakes, I think they mainly spring from bureaucratism, over-reliance on State subsidies, delays in adopting new policies, neglect in many managerial fields and lax discipline.

*Question:* What damage have bureaucratism and over-reliance on State subsidies in particular wrought upon the department?

*Answer:* They have led first of all to a bad structure of investment, which creates imbalances between the possibilities of the economy and the building of the material infrastructure in the first stage of the transition to socialism; to defective and badly coordinated planning; to imbalances and constant shifts in investment. Grassroots units are hamstrung and cannot conduct correct economic accounting due to defective mechanisms of operational guidance. The upshot is long delay in construction, high operating costs, low efficiency, lack of employment and difficult living conditions for workers.

*Question:* How can those difficulties be overcome?

*Answer:* First, we must stabilize and renovate our organization. The Building Ministry is responsible for State-level management. In our country at present the situation is as follows: in addition to three main branches specialized in civilian constructions, water conservancy works, and roads and bridges, respectively, over 30 ministries and general departments are each provided with a construction force of its own. In the provinces, there exist 403 State-run building enterprises and 5,000 building cooperatives. These organizations operate without unified leadership, resulting in a confused state of affairs: duplication, scattered materials and investments, fierce competition in the building market, soaring prices of building materials and low quality of works.

Second, we must rapidly give more autonomy to the grassroots, taking efficiency as the yardstick for assessing all economic activities.

However, this will be a fairly long process of struggle in which the efforts of our department must be well coordinated with those of other branches and localities.

*Question*: What are your views of such problems of concern to large masses of people as urbanization and housing?

*Answer*: These are great headaches. Since 1969 urban management and housing construction have been the responsibility of our Ministry. At present, there are 73 million square metres of housing space in our 70 cities and towns, of which 53 million are truly cramped. For water supply, there are 165 water works with a total capacity of 1.5 million cubic metres which satisfies only half of the needs. Each year, we have to maintain 3,800 kilometres of urban roads, 4,000 kilometres of electric power lines, 3,500 kilometres of water pipes, 1,000 public parks, remove 2 million tonnes of refuse, and 700,000 tonnes of human waste. While coping with this huge and complex task, we are hindered by the subsidy-based mechanism of management, by the lack of funds and materials, so much so that our towns have rapidly fallen into bad repair and the quality of life has declined. This state of things requires that the management of housing and urban works be made into an economic and technical branch whose management should be based on socialist cost accounting, solid material and technical bases and flexible mechanisms. Regarding the rents paid for State-run apartment houses, we should do away with State subsidies. At present, over half of them need repair — which will cost tens of billions of *dong* while the rents collected over several decades will barely cover the costs of whitewashing them once. We have submitted to the Council of Ministers a draft statute on selling and renting houses in the towns. Moreover, there are pressing housing problems in the Mekong delta which must be tackled in the near future.

*Question*: What is the policy of your department with regard to building materials?

*Answer*: Over the past years, the production of building materials has greatly increased. Starting with barely 300,000 tonnes of cement a year produced by the Haiphong plant, now 3 million tonnes are produced by the major plants, and another 600,000 tonnes by local ones. The output of other building materials like bricks, stone, sand, gravel, glass, prefabricated concrete has also increased in both amount and quality. But progress has been slow compared with the requirements. In order to better serve the State and the people and meet urgent demands for more building materials, we propose that, at least for a certain period of time two systems of prices be maintained in existence: prices fixed by the plan, and prices determined by the market. Of course, the gist of the matter remains to boost production so as to have ever more abundant supplies, better product quality, and cheaper prices.

*Question*: What are your targets in the coming period?

*Answer*: In the coming three years, the Building Ministry will complete 17 major works for the State. Five out of the 6 planned for this year are being undertaken. One major target is the commissioning of the first turbine generator of the Hoa Binh hydro-electric plant late this year together with a number of other works at the Tri An hydro-electric plant, the Lao Cai apatite mine, the Vung Tau oil and gas complex... These works constitute our contribution to the three major economic programmes of the Party and the State. At the same time, by building more apartment houses, hospitals, schools, houses of culture and urban public works we shall do our share in alleviating difficulties besetting our society at present. Thanks to the experience drawn from the past thirty years and our present determination for renewal we are confident that our department will fulfil its tasks. ●

# FOUR GENERATIONS OF MACHINE-TOOLS «MADE IN VIETNAM»

The Hanoi Machine-tools Works No.1 has just commemorated its thirtieth anniversary. Built with Soviet help after the victory of the resistance war against French aggression, this pioneer of the budding Vietnamese industry was entrusted with the task of equipping the factories to be set up. To equip the country with home-produced machine-tools had been only a dream in the past. Not long before, the three Indochinese countries, then French colonies, had had to import from France all industrial goods, even metal wire and nails — the development of industry being not encouraged by the colonial administration, mechanical engineering in particular being out of bounds.

## The first three generations of machine-tools.

Practically no trace is now left of the first generation of lathes manufactured by the Machine-tools Works No.1. The first T6 16 of this generation was assembled on the occasion of the official inauguration of the works on 12 April 1958, thirty years ago. Later the blueprints were transferred to an engineering plant under the Ministry of National Defence. Recently, we had occasion to see one specimen with an improved control system and a slimmer body. It was named T6M 16 and belonged to the second generation. Lathes of this type are now the workhorses of our engineering plants.

Lathes of the third generation boast an improved carriage and a safety shield. Named T6P16, two specimens were test-produced in 1987. 350 will be turned out this year.

Those three successive generations of machine-tools testify to the technical advance achieved by the works. Following the first phase of its enlargement, its floor space increased 2.6 times, and its technical equipment 2.7 times as compared with thirty years ago. Together with the above-mentioned lathes, the works has turned out large-sized T630 and T620 lathes, R525 drilling-machines, upright K.125 high-quality drilling-machines, 70R milling-machines, B365 planing-machines and spare parts like headstock spindles, vices, chucks, wheel pumps.

Over the past thirty years the works has turned out 15,000 machine-tools of various kinds and tens of thousands of tonnes of spare parts, contributing to strengthening our engineering industry during the patriotic resistance war against US aggression in the past and for economic development at present.

Machine-tools manufactured by the works are now working in plants in the North, the Centre and the South of the country. Recently some have been sent to the Central Highlands.

## A diversity of products

Although there is great demand for machine-tools, the works cannot concentrate on making them. On the contrary, its products now cover a wide range, particularly since the Fifth Party Congress.

Early in the eighties, owing to faulty planning, there were imbalances in industrial development, and a lot of machine-tools could not be sold. Instead of simply reducing its output, the works decided to diversify its products. A few years later, although the demand for machine-tools grew, other difficulties cropped up: materials were in short supply while equipment had grown obsolete. Moreover, because sale prices fixed by the State could not keep pace with costs, the works suffered financial losses and the workers' living conditions could not be improved.

At first, diversification of products was opposed by people in the management who wanted to specialize the works in machine-tools production. However, this diversification was required by the situation in many branches of the economy. Finally, the following decision was arrived at: to turn out a fair amount of machine-tools while producing a sufficient number of spare parts; to produce export goods, complete equipments for factories in the country and consumer items as well.

So far, the works has exported 100 lathes and tens of thousands of chucks, spindles, vices, ball-bearings, hydraulic boxes for heavy-duty lorries in operation in coal-mining areas, voltage-boosters for power generators and many other machine parts, thus saving a lot of foreign currency which would otherwise be spent on importing those items.

The bicycle free wheels made by the works have proved to be as good as imported ones: 800,000 have been supplied to the domestic trading services so far, and a production chain producing 200,000 a year has been supplied to the Vinh Phu engineering works. Equipment making 1 million and a half bicycle tyres and 1 million inner tubes each year has also been supplied to the Da Nang rubber works.

In recent years the works has also turned out equipment for small hydroelectric power stations: 31 stations of 20 to 3000 KW capacity, 26 of which have begun operation, supplying electricity for lighting homes in mountain villages and power for small workshops processing foodgrain. Larger stations have also been built, like those of Phu Ninh in Quang Nam-Da Nang, Song Muc in Thanh Hoa, Vi Xuyen in Ha Tuyen... In cooperation with a number of other enterprises ,the works has manufactured 100 KW generators highly praised by customers and speed regulators with electronic microcircuits.

Also in cooperation with other plants, the works has built a sugar-mill at the Tuan crossroads near Hue, processing 100 tonnes of sugarcane a day and using modern vacuum equipment.

On the site of the former Tuy Hoa sugar-mill in Phu Khanh a new mill is springing up, which will process 500 tonnes of sugarcane a day. The building was interrupted two years ago owing to lack of funds but equipment is now being assembled in anticipation of the coming sugarcane harvest. The equipment bears the label of Machine-tools Works No.1.

## Forward to large-scale engineering

So far the Hanoi Machine-tools Works No.1. is rated as a medium-sized plant. But it is now trying to tackle heavy engineering in order to serve the industrialization of the country.

Relying mainly on its own efforts, the works has begun setting up big engineering workshops equipped with powerful cranes capable of lifting loads of several dozen tonnes, a horizontal lathe capable of working on 12-metre-long objects, an upright lathe capable of processing objects weighing 40 tonnes and 6.3 m in diameter, and a 90-tonne boring machine.

A new landmark in the development of the works is the joint production of T.620A lathes under an agreement with the Soviet Union. Our Soviet friends will transfer the required technology and help us turn out two or five lathes in 1988, 500 in 1989 and 1,000 in 1990. This will be the fourth generation of machine-tools made in Vietnam. Following the production of these high-grade universal lathes, the works will make indepth investment to improve technologies and train workers. With the new formula of receiving materials and technical means from and delivering products to Soviet partners, it will from now on cooperate with them in production and business for mutual benefit.

HO QUOC

# POPULATION GROWTH: A MAJOR CONCERN

Our world is full of contradictions. While the developed European countries have sounded the alarm about the decrease and aging of their populations caused by the low birth rate, a great number of developing countries, including Vietnam, are worrying about their demographic growth.

Not that Vietnam has done nothing to cope with this situation. Just read this news item: Duy An commune (Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam — Da Nang province) had brought down its population growth rate from 3.5% in 1976 to 1% in 1986 (*Nhan Dan* newspaper, 3 May 1988). This is quite an achievement for a commune, since at its Sixth Congress, the Communist Party of Vietnam recommended that efforts be made to lower that rate in the country to 1.7% by 1990.

Regrettably, however, Duy An is an isolated case. Our population growth rate is still high and is a major concern of our Government.

## Population Explosion in Vietnam

The phrase "population explosion" used by demographers to depict the situation in the Third World after World War II depicts quite accurately the situation in Vietnam. In spite of the many wars that have ravaged our country, in which millions of people are believed to have died, the population has been increasing very rapidly.

Formerly, as in all colonial and semi-colonial countries, the population growth rate in Vietnam was low, as can be seen in the following table:

| *Year* | *Population* |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 13,000,000 |
| 1936 | 18,970,000 |
| 1943 | 22,150,000 |
| 1960 | 30,172,000 |
| 1975 | 47,638,000 |
| 1980 | 53,772,000 |
| 1985 | 59,872,000 |
| 1987 | 62,500,000 |

According to the statistics, the time taken by our population to double has shrunk: It took 40 years from 1921 to 1961 to increase from 15 million to 30 million, but only 25 years (from 1961 to 1985) to go up from 30 million to 60 million.

In the last few decades, the natural population growth rate was quite high:

| *Year* | *Birth rate* | *Death rate* | *Natural increase* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1957 | 4.67% | 1.22% | 3.45% |
| 1960 | 4.61 | 1.20 | 3.41 |
| 1970 | 3.46 | 0.66 | 2.80 |
| 1976 | 3.95 | 0,75 | 3.20 |
| 1980 | 3.17 | 0.70 | 2.47 |
| 1985 | 2.84 | 0.69 | 2.15 |
| 1986 | 2.76 | 0.69 | 2.08 |

For two successive decades, the population growth rate was over 3%, and only in the eighties has it been brought down to over 2%. At the present rate of increase, our population grows by 4,000 each day (equal to the population of a commune), by 120,000 per month (the population of a district) and 1.5 million per year (the population of a province).

There are many causes to this situation. First, it is due to the achievements of modern science and the health service, which have brought down the number of deaths caused by contagious diseases and diseases formerly regarded as "incurable", as well as the child mortality rate. There are also social and psychological causes: in Vietnam people marry early in life at the age of 20-23. Male descendants are prized, so much so that a woman won't stop having children until one is born. In the countryside, having many children (potential manpower) is an advantage in farm work. Note the interaction between the material and cultural standards and the population growth rate: they grow in inverse proportion to each other. Also to be noted is the factor of urbanisation. Compared with the towns, the rate of population increase in the countryside is definitely higher, and this when the country folk constitute an overwhelming majority. In 1981 our urban population accounted for only 19.1% of the total population. Although this was higher than in 1960 (15%) it was still very low compared with other countries (24.4% in Thailand in 1982 and 20% in Indonesia in 1980).

Recently in a small section of our population especially in the urban centres, there has been a tendency toward self-imposed birth control (two children at most) due to difficult living conditions, particularly the shortage of housing. The influence of the cultural factor is to be noted, especially among intellectuals. It is a positive sign for family planning, which should be further studied.

At present, population growth poses a series of major problems, creating powerful "demographic pressure" on all aspects of social life. Some examples:

While in the last three years, food production has remained at a virtual standstill, (around 18 million tonnes per year), the population has increased by nearly 5 million. Malnutrition has reached an alarming degree, particularly among children. In Vietnam the amount of calories produced by the daily food ration is only about 1,800, while it is over 3,300 in the developed countries and over 2,200 in other developing countries. Malnutrition has had damaging effects on the physical and intellectual development of children.

It is reckoned that for an increase of one million inhabitants, it is necessary to have 6 million more metres of fabrics, 3,600 more hospital beds, 5.2 million more square metres of housing, 30,000 more classrooms and 45,000 more teachers... Finding employment for those one million people and meeting their material needs would cost 15% of the national income.

Meanwhile no fast changes can be expected in the economic situation of the country, which is only at the start of a process of renewal.

Looking further ahead we can foresee an even stronger "demographic pressure". By 1990, the number of women of child-bearing age will be 42% greater than in 1980 and consequently by the year 2000, the birth rate will have doubled, even if the population growth rate remains unchanged.

This situation is to be pondered over not only by the authorities but also by the population at large. Ordinarily, it should be a cause for concern not only to individual families but to the whole of society. To reverse this psychological trend will take a long time. Family planning should involve a broad mass mobilisation in which all sections of the population should take part.

(Continued on page 23)

# Export of Pharmaceutical Products

NGUYEN DUY CUONG, *Vice-Minister of Public Health and Director General of the Vietnam Pharmaceuticals Trust.*

The Sixth Party Congress laid down three programmes to be carried out in the next five years (1986-1990) and aimed at producing food, consumer goods and export goods. The task of the Public Health Service is not only to strive to improve the health conditions of the people but also to find medicinal materials and make pharmaceutical products in order to contribute to the implementation of the consumer goods and export programmes.

In all countries, the pharmaceutical branch has two tasks: a social task, i.e. to serve the sick, and an economic and technical task which plays an important role in the national economy. In the developing countries, production of pharmaceuticals is also a major export-oriented activity.

Since long, apart from producing medicines, the pharmaceutical branch has played a significant part in our export trade. In the last few years export of materia medica, drugs and medical equipment has brought in millions of rubles and dollars every year.

Among our most appreciated export items are medicinal materials and pharmaceutical products. Lying as it does in the tropics, our country enjoys climatic conditions favourable to the growth and cultivation of medicinal plants, for which there are important markets in Southeast Asia. The major pharmaceutical enterprises in the world prepare medicines not only from chemicals but also from medicinal plants. Indeed medicines prepared from chemicals have shown many drawbacks and there is now a tendency to have recourse to natural materials.

For many past years our country mostly exported unprocessed medicinal materials. A country that imported them could process, refine, and pack them, and then resell them at a large profit. Hence the great advantage we would gain by processing and packing our medicinal materials before exporting them.

Formerly, export of pharmaceuticals was done by different regions and enterprises. This led to competition among them for the procurement of medicinal materials, high buying prices, and low product quality.

This also led to careless exploitation of wild medicinal plants while the proper technique was not observed in their cultivation. Hence the decline in their quality.

The Sixth Party Congress recommended that large areas be reserved for the growing of medicinal plants and a proper investment policy be adopted. This would lead to high product quality and low costs. Over the last few years, we have expanded the growing of trees and plants yielding medicinal oils such as mint, cajeput, etc. However, the results obtained are still far from satisfactory. We are still marking time, while countries onjoying less favourable climatic conditions have been selling on world markets thousands of tons of materia medica each year.

The key point is to work out concrete policies to encourage the growers and provide them with information about world markets.

We must concentrate on a number of selected plants, which may number in the hundreds. Growing abundantly in many parts of the country, in mountains regions, in the delta and on the coast, they are traditional medicinal materials used by many peoples in the world as well as our own. If a suitable pricing policy is adopted, stable outlets can be readily found for them.

Recently, thanks to excellent results obtained in our scientific studies, we have been able to strongly develop the planting of many medicinal plants. Our current five-year plan includes a programme for growing medicinal plants of high export value.

At the same time, we shall boost our export of traditional medicines: mentholated balms, tonic wines prepared from animal (snakes and geckos) and vegetal (ginseng) ingredients; ointments against rheumatism prepared from snake's venom; sedatives from lotus seeds; tonics from bee products; painkiller against toothache prepared from a herb. The medicines traditionally used by our people will be upgraded and made into export items. Such medicines are especially appreciated in neighbouring Kampuchea and Laos. To the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), we have presented a list of some of our best pharmaceutical products. When the proper testing procedures have been approved, we shall be able to supply medicinal products to all Council members.

In export trade, the quality of packing is also a most important factor. This question must not be neglected.

We can also export a variety of high-grade medical instruments made of rubber (gloves, catheters...) as well as glass hypodermic syringes.

We must export if we are to import what we need: medicines, especially antibiotics, which we cannot yet produce in the country. Our foreign-currency earnings are still modest. So stepping up exports is a must. Exports will also work as a lever on the production of medicines for home consumption. ●

## POPULATION...

*(Continued from page 21)*

First, it is necessary to make men as well as women realize that they have equal responsibility in implementing birth control.

The solution of the demographic problem is a long-haul endeavour. One cannot hope to complete it only after a few campaigns. The psychology of the population and their material and cultural living conditions are fundamental factors which cannot be changed overnight. Recently, there has been some progress in this very complicated situation. After 1981, when the slogan "each couple should give birth to two children at most and observe an interval of five years between their births" was set forth, the birth rate was brought down from 3.1% (1981) to 2.7% (1986), a yearly decrease of 0.04%; the demographic growth rate dropped from 2.3% to 2.08%, the average number of births per woman from 4.56 (1981) to 3.81 (1985), the proportion of families with two or fewer children grows. By 1986, some provinces had brought the demographic growth rate down to below 1.7%: 1.58% in Hanoi, 1.52% in Haiphong, 1.4% in Thai Binh, 1.62% in Quang Nam — Da Nang, 1.63% in Ho Chi Minh City.

However, as said above, population growth in the whole country is still a cause for concern. In the near future its reduction will remain a burning necessity. The resolution of the Sixth Party Congress says that we must at all costs bring the rate of demographic growth to 1.7% in 1990.

This is an achievable target. If the number of women with three or more children (about 715,000) is halved, the growth rate will remain at 1.5%.

Here are the fundamental measures to be carried out:

. 1. To expand the facilities for birth control. This is an indispensable condition.

2. To amend State policies on birth control in order to encourage its practice.

3. To step up educational and cultural measures among the population, first and foremost, among young people.

The success of this campaign depends to a large extent on the solution of socio-economic problems, mostly the stabilisation of the people's living conditions. This is a very difficult endeavour but there is no alternative.

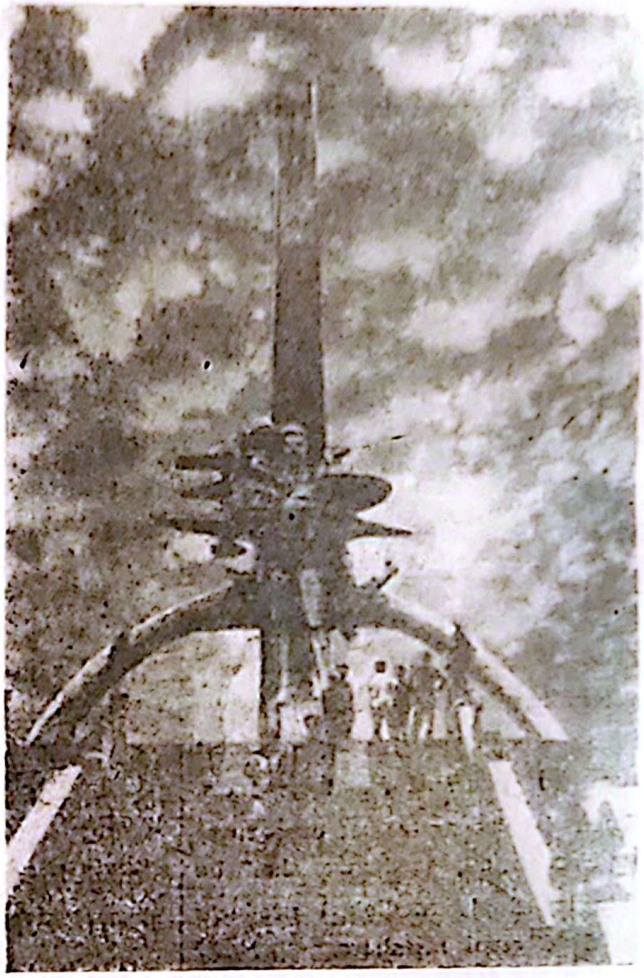
VU KIEN
*and*
VU NGOC BINH

# MEMORIALS AND WAR MARTYRS CEMETERIES

Before 1975, war martyrs cemeteries in Vietnam were built far from villages, in out-of-the-way and quiet places. They were then conceived as places of repose for the fighters fallen for the Homeland. Now they have been brought near villages or towns. A case in point is the war martyrs cemetery of Da Lat (Lam Dong province) set up in 1976. It is erected on a 40m-high hill over 40 ha with three parts: a memorial, a garden and a forest. The memorial has four faces looking into four directions and is made of strong concrete blocs with a tapering top. On the right and on the left of it lies a garden with stone alleys bordered with trees. Backwards lie the graves in a verdant forest.

Besides bringing cemeteries nearer to populated areas, many localities have erected big memorials in their midst. Most remarkable is the war martyrs cemetery of Truong Son completed in April 1977 in gratitude for their exploits on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The cemetery occupies 140,000 square metres on the banks of the Ben Hai river, 20 km from Dong Ha. In a majestic natural setting between mountain and river, it boasts of a memorial, a stele recording the exploits, a six-group big monument, a smaller one and row upon row of graves. The main monument is 6-metre high not counting its pedestal and represents the three military units working on the trail: sappers, drivers and anti-aircraft gunners.

The monuments — most of their authors being fighters — are conceived with a keen observation and a deep feeling. Some stand out by their strong look and others by their romantic and fresh air but all are steeped in folk art. The monument *Transport by Boat* (by Kim Giao) and the monument *On the March* (by Trinh Dan) depict the combat to defend the communications lines to the front. The monument *Carrying Ammunition* (by Ta Quang Bao) is inspired by the Central Highlands people shouldering weapons to the battlefield. The monument *Tying Friendship Threads Around Wrists* (by Duy Bo) expresses the fighting solidarity between the Vietnamese armymen and the Lao people.



Monument to the Victory of the Central Highlands Army Corps.

Bearing a highly artistic character and attracting much attention are the *Monument to Ba Gia Victory* of Lam Dong province and the *Monument to the Victory of the Central Highlands Army Corps*. The former built on Co Rua hill, Son Tinh district, and completed in May 1987, records the glorious victory won on 31 May 1965 by the main forces in co-ordina-

tion with Son Tinh fighters and people who badly mauled a combat regiment and three battalions of the US-puppets. The main monument represents an 11-m high Liberation fighter. On both sides are two monumental 60-square-metre bas-reliefs. From the hill-foot to the monument there is a perron with two sections. Halfway up the hill stand three pillars 9.6m high symbolyzing the three spearheads of the struggle: military, political and propaganda among enemy soldiers. Stuck to the three pillars are three boards 9m long by 3m wide of coloured mosaic picturing the four components of the armed forces of people's war: the regular forces, the local forces, the militia-guerilla force and the long-haired force [1].

The Monument to the Victory of the Central Highlands Army Corps (by Trinh Dan) inaugurated in 1985 is a laborious artistic work. It is not merely a monument, but a centre of traditional culture. Here are built two large houses containing precious artefacts offered by the provinces of Gia Lai — Kontum and Dac Lac to the units as remembrances of the feeling between armymen and people. The monument comprises a parabolic line strained like a crossbow of Central Highlanders ready to fight, on which is a soldier carrying in his hand a rifle and on his shoulder a radiant child. The statue of the combatant is nearly 7m high and weighs about ten tonnes. Behind the armyman's back is a leafy camouflage, the leaves fluttering in the sunlight like the strong wings of the giant birds mentioned in Central Highlands tales. The glaze covering the monument glitters while the hollows are plunged in a dark blue, both mysterious and majestic, creating a deep artistic impact. The work has the vitality and the beauty of a man's bass resounding over the forests and mountains.

It is difficult to quote all the memorials and war martyrs cemeteries set up throughout the country, each of which has its peculiarities but all of which voice our people's great gratitude to those who have laid down their lives for the country.

KIEN AN

*1. The "long-haired force" designates the women who engaged in propaganda work among enemy soldiers.*

*One of the seven groups of statues in the monument to revolutionary martyrs and war heroes in the Truong Son Range where Ho Chi Minh Trail ran during the war of resistance to US aggression.*

Photo: TRINH DAN

# NOTES ON HUE ARCHITECTURAL VESTIGES

*Architect* HOANG DAO KINH

Hue — capital of the last Vietnamese feudal dynasty — contains a rich architectural heritage.

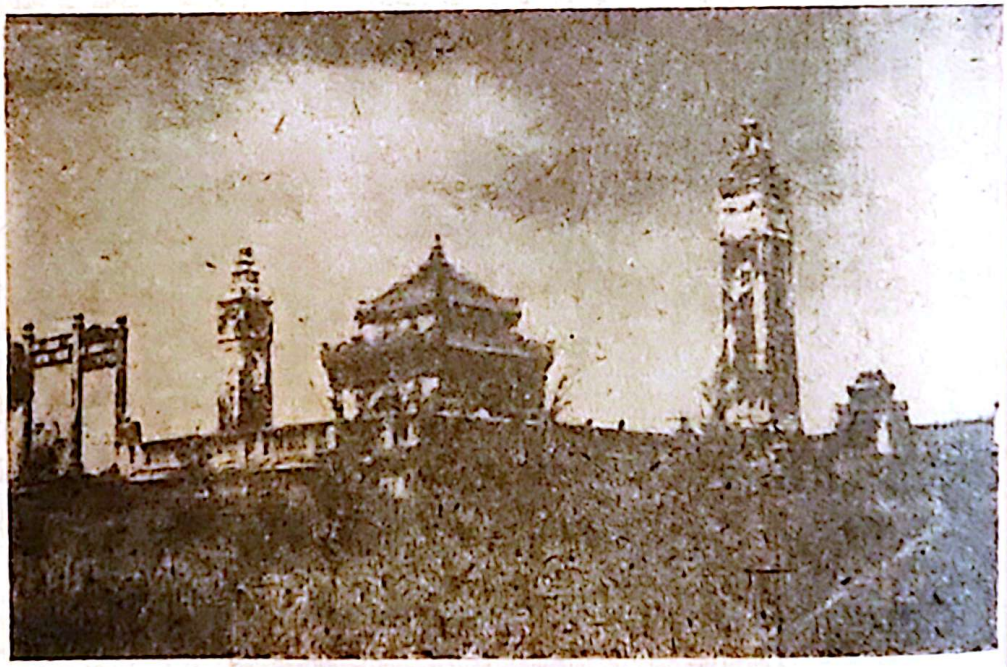
Research into this heritage has barely begun. Generally speaking, people admire its beauty and originality although some tend to underestimate its value.

This architectural patrimony is a unique collection of typical buildings of a past period of history comprising ramparts, palaces, temples, tombs, pagodas, houses, streets... They provide researchers with the only means available at present to study Vietnamese feudal architecture in a systematic way.

The system of ramparts in three rings, the moats, canals, gates and porticos, brick and stone bridges, are the only ones preserved intact in our national heritage. A superficial examination has led some people to think that the Hue citadels were built in the French Vauban style. In fact, the layout and architecture of Hue follow Asian and traditional Vietnamese forms (Of its three components — the outer, imperial and forbidden citadels — only the outer citadel was built in the Vauban style).

The composition and names of the palaces in the imperial citadel (Can Chanh, Thai Mieu, The Mieu...) although borrowed from Chinese architecture, show many peculiar traits. In their layout for instance, the Hue palaces stand almost at the centre of the courtyards while those in Beijing stand on a line separating two court yards... Some people have opined that the Ngo Mon Gate in Hue is modelled after Tienanmen in Beijing. Yet their pictures will suffice to show the original features of the Vietnamese gate if they are examined carefully enough. In Europe, many Gothic cathedrals were built along the centuries, but it is not difficult to differentiate between the Italian, French, German, English, and Gothic styles.

Thai Hoa and Long An palaces are unique specimens



*The inner citadel in Hue (19th century).*

of their kind. They are the largest wooden structures in our country. Although light and simple in appearance they evoke the magnificence of ancient royal palaces.

Other feudal architectural structures which could be seen only in Hue are the National College Quoc Tu Giam, the Di Luan, Duyet Thi and Minh Khiem Halls where the king attended dramatic performances; the Thai Binh Pavilion where he read books and composed poems, the Dien Tho Palace where the queen mother lived, the Phu Van Pavilion where the king's edicts were promulgated, the Ho Quyen arena where he watched fights between elephants and tigers...

*The Trang Tien bridge crossing the Perfume river.*
*Photo:* VNA

Hue is an ancient urban architectural complex which has been preserved almost intact. Built early in the 19th century, many of its components are still in existence: ramparts, palaces, temples, offices, officials' residences; traders and artisans' streets, markets, city gates, suburban villages... There is natural harmony between those old vestiges and the new buildings erected over the last decades. There is harmonious transition between its three component parts: the city proper, the intermediate gardens on the banks of the Perfume river, and the surrounding countryside. Hue is particularly beautiful when watched from the top of Mount Ngu Binh.

Having served as an imperial capital for a century and a half, Hue displays a peculiar architecture with original features. Here are some:

— Many houses are "twinned" (i.e. joined together, with a "crabshell" roof and a gutter to collect rain water in-between.

— The houses generally have eight-slopped two-tiered roofs. Unlike northern communal houses and pagodas, the roof-corners are straight, not curved. Yin-yang tiles are used instead of slipper-shaped ones.

The assemblage of wooden parts greatly differs from that observed in the North. An original feature of the truss is the *gia thu*, or false arm, which is both a prop and an ornament. There is such beauty and balance in the wooden framework that one thinks of it as carved ivory rather than assembled wood.

Hue architectural structures display a wealth of ornamentations and sophisticated techniques of engraving, painting, inlaying, mosaic fitting... Even when the motifs are of Chinese

inspiration, their execution is wholly Vietnamese, with the hallmarks of Hue craftsmanship.

In the Minh Thanh palace and Gia Long tomb, one can admire splendid mother-of-pearl-inlaid panels. Like-wise, this technique is widely used in the decoration of the Long An palace, and of old mansions and the furniture they contain. The fitting of porcelain mosaics on the Quang Duc gate, on the roof of Sung An and Hoa Khiem palaces, in the Khai Dinh tomb complex is also a magnificent trait of Hue architecture which lends it grace and variety.

One of the outstanding achievements of Hue architecture is the organic combination of human construction and natural environment. All buildings, palaces, temples, houses, even tombs are admirably fitted into the natural surroundings due to proper composition, transition in space, choice of proportions, layout, choice of colour and beautiful landscaping.

In this respect, the tombs of Gia Long (unfortunately in very bad repair), Minh Mang, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc are masterpieces of landscaping following Eastern traditions.

The Vietnamese architects showed complete mastery in instilling poetry into the natural environment and in creating harmonious architectural ensembles in which man-made structures and nature are in complete agreement.

One may add that the process of development of Hue architecture can be divided into two stages:

In the first stage which spanned the 19th century, and saw the reigns of Gia Long, Minh Mang, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc, Hue architecture developed within the framework of national traditions. Typical of this stage are such structures as the Ngo Mon gate with the Ngu Phuong pavilion, the The Mieu temple, the Hien Lam pavilion, the Thai Hoa throne room, the Minh Mang and Tu Duc tombs.

In its second stage (from the late 19th century to 1945), Hue architecture like our architecture as a whole came under Western European influence. Hence, it developed many contradictions showing signs of decadence and blind imitation, but also recorded excellent achievements. The Khai Dinh tomb built in the twenties is a case in point. While some have made disparaging remarks about it, others have seen it as a successful combination of Eastern and Western architectures, as well as a noteworthy performance of Vietnamese decorators, ceramic mosaic-makers in particular.

Today, sustained efforts must be made to preserve the vestiges of Hue architecture and art, in their harmonious relationship with the natural environment for Hue to remain a city with a beautiful face and a distinguished personality.

# ONE HOUR WITH WRITER LE LUU

Editor's note: *Le Luu wrote one of his first short stories, "Lunar New Year in Mua Village" when he was a young NCO. Now he is 46 and has spent nearly thirty years in the army. He has written many short stories and several novels, among them "Taking up Arms" (1970), "Return to the Rush Fields" (1974), "Opening up Forests" (1977), "Times Long Past". The last was awarded a first prize by the Vietnam Writers' Association. Below is an interview between Le Luu and Ha Pham Phu of* Quan Doi Nhan Dan *(People's Army) newspaper. (1986)*

*Ha Pham Phu*: "Times Long Past" has been warmly received by the public and quickly reprinted. Tens of critics have written about it. What do you think of that?

*Le Luu*: Our literature has been wont to "illustrate" policies and treat of "topical" themes, meanwhile forgetting about man and his drama. My novel spoke about that so far neglected aspect of life. It spoke the "truth". That is perhaps the reason why the reader likes it.

*Ha Pham Phu*: Have you said in this novel all you meant to say?

*Le Luu* (smiling): I should say that the writer often fails to achieve his aims. Anyhow the core of the matter, the message I wanted to deliver, has so far not been commented upon. Only marginal themes have been discussed by the critics.

*Ha Pham Phu*: What is this core?

*Le Luu*: Man's nature. What is art if not beauty? It must seek to discover and portray man's nature. By observing other people and myself as well I have noted that the individual and his right to live constantly clash with the community and the collective. The more civilized a society the more visible this contradiction. The difference between different social regimes lies in their respective ways to solve the contradiction. Marxism-Leninism advocates the total liberation of man, the creation of conditions allowing the individual to fully develop and to live in agreement with the community. There should be no mutual exclusion by the individual and the collective. A society in which individuals fight one another is a degrading one. A society in which all individuals are alike has no basis on which to continue in existence.

*Ha Pham Phu*: In this respect "Times Long Past" is completely different from "Taking up Arms" and "Opening up Forests"... How do you view this difference?

*Le Luu*: "Times Long Past" was published in 1986 but had been written a few years before. It is indeed different from my previous writings.

"Return to the Rush Fields", "Opening up Forests", "Boundaries", "The Soldier's Native Place"... were written by a participant in a common endeavour, a man fulfilling a task. They belong to a "business" or "service" literature... Like my own self, they had many weaknesses, yet were able to make a modest contribution to our people's cause in their time.

A writer is engaged in a constant quest. His working life is a long chain of successes and failures.

When I thought of writing "Times Long Past", I could not help looking at myself. I realized that my former writings failed to delve deep into man's character, psychology and the laws governing the development of his personality. I said to myself that I could

no longer write as I used to. So I wrote "Times Long Past".

*Ha Pham Phu*: It was a forecast?

*Le Luu*: Forecasting is one of the functions of literature. Writers should always go ahead of their time. As I said above, I did my best, but it is up to the reader to judge.

*Ha Pham Phu*: What have you written after that novel? Has it been in the same vein?

*Le Luu*: I have written "The Humourless Colonel", in which I depict old people who are always afraid lest young people should undo the good work of their predecessors. My inspiration in this novel is different from what it was in "Times Long Past".

*Ha Pham Phu*: The form also differs?

*Le Luu*: Yes. "The Humourless Colonel" is more compact: only about 150 pages, without any dialogue in them. It will be published by the Youth Publishing House. Some of my friends have told me that the matter should take up about 400-500 pages, but my own opinion is that since paper is costly and the general reader lacks both money and time, I should give it a condensed treatment. Moreover, it is best if the reader is left with a craving for more.

*Ha Pham Phu*: Let us go back to "Times Long Past". It is a fairly long novel, isn't it? But have you said in this novel all you wanted to say? Have you delivered your message fully?

*Le Luu*: No, I couldn't do that. Besides if a writer fills a lot of space but fails to provide his readers with food for thought, they will desert him. I hope you understand what I mean.

*Ha Pham Phu*: Is that the reason why the novel will be brought to the screen? To help drive home the message?

*Le Luu*: To some extent. There are things that images, sound, and acting can express better than words.

*Ha Pham Phu*: Do you believe that the film will be as popular as the novel?

*Le Luu*: It is always difficult to predict the future. However, I have great faith in director Ho Quang Minh. Now 39, he used to live in Switzerland where he first came in 1967 to work toward a doctorate of physics. But he finally decided to make films. With the General Film Studio of Ho Chi Minh City he has made a newsreels. "A Story in My Street", and the feature film "Karma" (Man's Fate). The latter has been shown at film festivals in India in 1986, then in the United States, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Sweden, and on Swiss television.

"Times Long Past" has been made into a screenplay by Ho Quang Minh. I have worked with him on this film and I like him very much. The first sequences will be shot this July. I hope that the public will like the film.

* * *

*Note*: Below is an outline of Le Luu's novel "Times Long Past".

When Giang Minh Sai was ten years old he was compelled by his peasant family to marry a girl three years his senior. Right from the start he disliked her. For years later, his feelings for her did not change. But social and family pressure — his father, his uncle Ha, his elder brother Tinh, and later the army unit in which he served — forced him to live with her in the name of "ethics" and "honour".

The young man had tried to escape from his "wife" by enlisting in the army and volunteering to go to a far-away battlefront. He became a war hero but this boldness did not free him from his unhappy marriage. Finally, when the country was liberated in 1975, the army allowed him to divorce his wife, who by then had borne him a child. At the age of 34, he was demobbed and undertook post-graduate studies. He met a young woman, whom he loved passionately and blindly, failing to see great differences between them in character and attitude to life. He married her but eventually their union had to come to an end in spite of the birth of two children. Putting on his back his knapsack — all he owned — he returned to his native village.

He had lived a life that was not truly his own. That was his tragedy. ●

# WOMAN PAINTER VAN DUONG THANH

In 1969, when she was eighteen, Van Duong Thanh, then a student at the Vietnam Fine Arts College, participated for the first time in an art exposition by women painters. Since then she has regularly participated in annual art expositions held in Hanoi by the Hanoi Association of Writers and Artists. She has also taken part in art exhibitions sponsored by the Vietnam Plastic Arts Association and other organizations at home and abroad.

The third personal art exposition by Van Duong Thanh was held in April this year in Hanoi, featuring 64 of her works, some dating back to her student days, some done during the war of resistance against US aggression, and some in the recent past. It gives an overall view of the evolution in her creative talents.

Her favourite materials are gouaches, oils and silk. Of late, she has also tried her hand at pumiced lacquer.

Landscapes and still lifes are her recurrent themes. Her style tends to be part-realist, part-impressionist. Her paintings are characterized by ease, purity and depth of feelings. She works more on masses and lines than on volumes.

«Colour is the direct expression of humah feeling,» she often says. Probably, this is the reason why she is more attentive to colour than form in her artistic expression. Her palette describes so effectively the sunny landscapes of Vietnam.

Van Duong Thanh's style is a happy continuation of national art traditions and is at the same time in harmony with the character of the modern Vietnamese.

In January 1988, Van Duong Thanh was invited by the Svedebygden Art Association in Sweden to hold an individual exposition there. The exhibits drew keen interest from Swedish art circles. We called on her return from Stockholm.

Here are some of the things she told me :

«I had the chance to visit Sweden in the autumn of 1987 and was invited by the Svedebygden Art Association to hold an exhibition of my works in early 1988.

«The Swedish public gave me a very warm reception, in no small measure because I am a Vietnamese and a woman.

« Even before the exhibition opened, correspondents from eight Swedish papers interviewed me. I noticed their interest in the fact that I went in for painting when I was a very young child and also in the system of training at Vietnamese art schools.

«They showed pleasant surprise when told about the care given by the Vietnamese Government to art and artists. They told me that my paintings suggested that the Vietnamese public is highly appreciative of art and that art is very popular in Vietnam.

«I was invited by the Hultsfred Art Association to hold an exhibition in July 1988 and another at Falun University north of Stockholm. Then I received an invitation to hold an exposition at the Stockholm Art Centre in late 1989.

«My dream has always been to convey to the public in faraway countries some idea of the Vietnamese soul and of the beauty and charm of nature and people in Vietnam; some impression of Vietnamese traditional art, which is still carefully preserved in modern Vietnamese painting. I wish, through the language of art, to bring men of all lands closer together.

«After 1989 I hope that an exhibition by Vietnamese artists could be organised at the Stockholm Art Centre. The director of the centre, Dr.Dag Malmberg, has shown keen interest in this idea and he said he believed the exhibition would be warmly received by people in Northern Europe, who would be made to like the Vietnamese people even better because art is the direct expression of the soul of a nation, the most powerful means of communication and a source of mutual sympathy.

«Of course, I also hope to be given the chance to hold another exhibition in Hanoi at the National Art Gallery where are already displayed six of the paintings I have done during the past ten years. It is always a source of great pleasure and pride for artists to show their best-liked works to their friends and compatriots.

VAN HOA

# CHRONOLOGY . CHRONOLOGY

(15 April — 14 May)

## APRIL

16. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his wife pay an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

17 — 19. A Party and State delegation of the Socialist Republic of Rumania, led by Nicolae Ceausescu, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam. A joint communique is issued by the two sides.

19 — 23. *Ho Chi Minh City:* A conference of General Directors of freighting and ship-owing organizations under the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) is held in Vietnam for the first time. It discusses measures to help Vietnam develop maritime transport.

20. *France:* Signing of an agreement under which the French Government will send 4,380 tonnes of wheat flour to Vietnam in 1988, as aid.

— The *Nhan Dan* daily reports that a 90-minute TV film entitled "Vietnam Today" is nearly completed by film-makers from the Federal Republic of Germany.

According to its director, Michel Busher, the film shows how Vietnam has tried to overcome the sequels of war over the past 13 years.

21. The SRV Council of State confers decorations on army units defending the Truong Sa archipelago.

— A high-level delegation of the 19 July Sandinista Youth Union (Nicaragua) concludes its official friendship visit to Vietnam, begun on 9 April.

21 — 27. A delegation of leading political cadres of the National Army of the German Democratic Republic, led by Lieutenant General Horst Bruno, member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Deputy Defence Minister, and Head of the General Political Department, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

22. Minister for External Economic Affairs Doan Duy Thanh attends a ministerial conference of Group 77 on a general system of preferential treatment in trade, held in Belgrade.

24 — 29. A delegation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by G.P. Razumovski, alternate member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, visits Vietnam.

25. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam makes public an important document on the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes in which the cases of Vietnam and China are examined in the light of international law.

28. Deputy Foreign Minister Tran Quang Co concludes his visit to Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. During his stay in Indonesia, he attended the 44th conference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

## MAY

7. *Hanoi:* Holding of a meeting to celebrate the 125th founding anniversary of the International Red Cross Committee.

9. *Hanoi:* Inauguration of a Centre for Cultural and Scientific Activities at Quoc Tu Giam (Temple of Literature) where scholars were trained as early as the year 1070. This will be a meeting place for Vietnamese and foreign cultural activists, scientists and ordinary people who wish to devote themselves to building a more beautiful Hanoi in every respect.

10. The SRV Council of State meets to hear a report on the visits to Vietnam by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and General Secretary of the Rumanian Communist Party Nicolae Ceausescu. It also decides to convene the third session of the eighth National Assembly of the SRV in late June this year and appoints a number of ambassadors to foreign countries.

10 — 17. A delegation of the Communist Party of Germany led by its President Herbert Mies pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

11. *Hanoi:* Signing of an agreement under which Sweden will help Vietnam restore a number of factories producing consumer goods in the 1988-1990 period.

12. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam sends a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China proposing that the two sides hold talks on land border issues.

— *Hanoi:* Holding of the Second Congress of the Union of Scientific and Technological Associations of Vietnam. A 49-member Central Council (the second) was elected with Professor Ha Hoc Trac, member of the CPV Central Committee, as its President. CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh attended and addressed the conference.

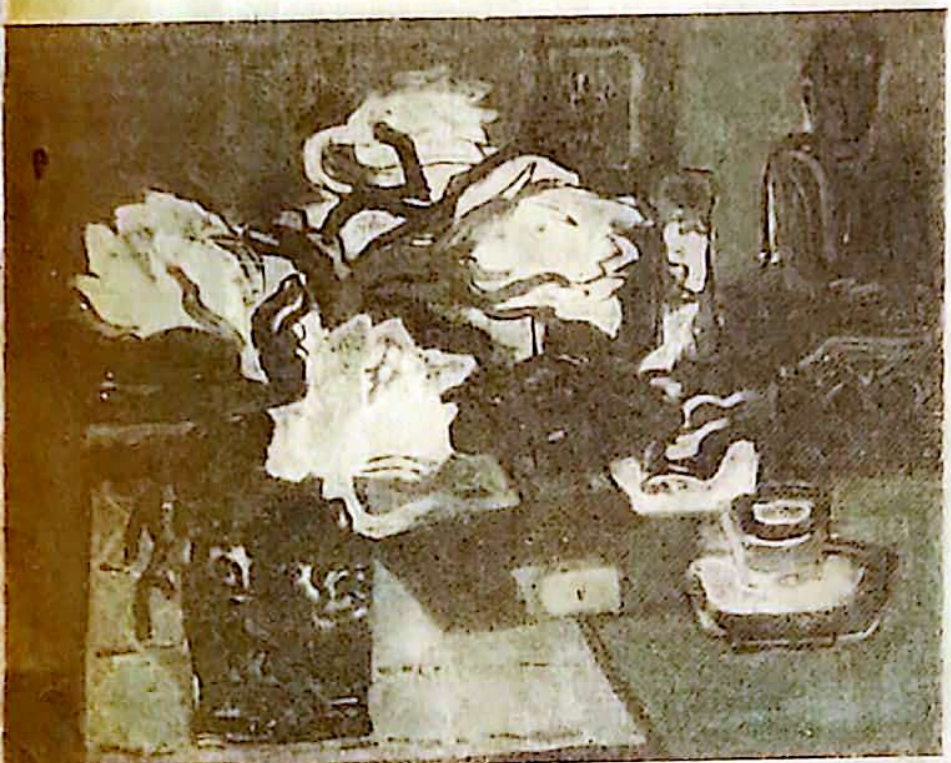
— Holding of an informal meeting of participants in the Paris Conference for ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its opening ceremony. Le Duc Tho, the Special Advisor to the Vietnamesse delegation, is present.

Speaking at the meeting, he highlights the lessons drawn from the negotiations and says how they can be turned to account in our present foreign relations.

*Portrait of painter Bui Xuan Phai (Crayons on gio paper).*

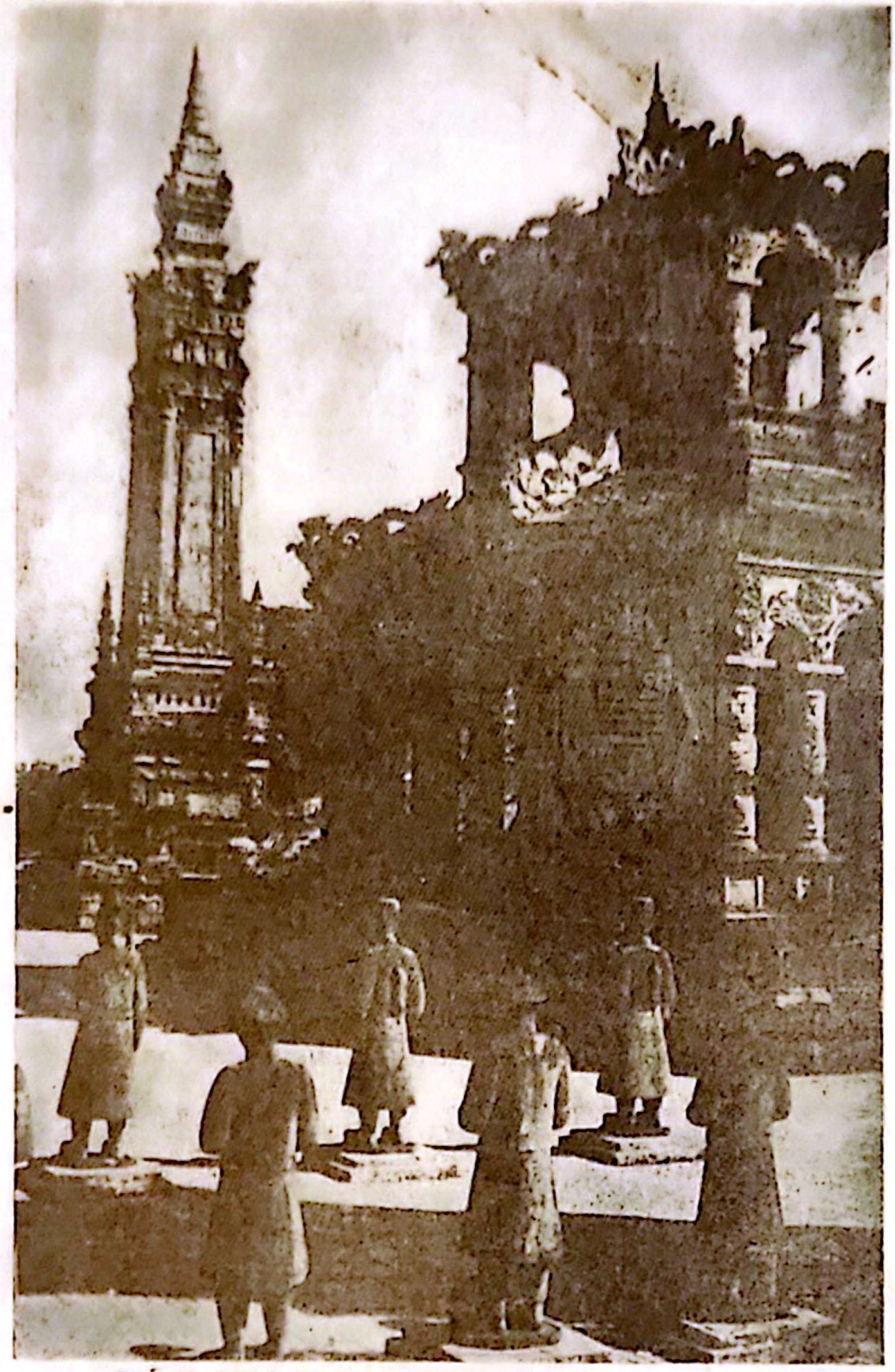
*Little Son reading (Water-colours on gio paper).*

## Paintings of Woman Painter Van Duong Thanh



*Flowers and Buddha statue (Gouache).*

Photos: NGUYET DIEU



*The Khai Dinh Mausoleum in Hue.*

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